THE

HISTORY

OF

Miſs MARIA BARLOWE.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER I.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

MY father is pleaſed to expreſs much wonder at our frequent exchange of letters; and is it a loſs to gueſs what ſubject, ſuch a chit as I am, can find to entertain a perſon of your riper years, and more exalted underſtanding?—He ſuppoſes you are fond of reciting your own adventures in love-matters; which, as one ſays, is the cement of young wo-

 mens

mens friendſhip; without conſidering that it may poſſibly ſet me agog to flouriſh as the little heroine of a romance myſelf.

In vain do I tell him Miſs Harwood is too wiſe, and too good to miſlead a poor girl, who loves her, and whom ſhe loves—the litle incidents of our family, our comments on ſuch books as fall in our way, ſome characters that we endeavour to delineate, and ſo forth, furniſh abundant matter for pen-prattle.—And, in truth, my heart, as yet, never felt the ſhadow of an attachment to any of the other ſex, but to him and my brother—filial and fraternal love, ſeldom, I am apt to think, glows with more ardor than in my boſom; and, indeed, my father's fondneſs for me, ſeems more than parental.—Since my mother's death, his whole delight has appeared to center in his

his Maria—he is certainly too partial.—My brother has but the ſecond place in his affections, which I am very ſorry for.——As to my honoured ſtep-mother, you know, ſhe never was a very amiable perſon—it was a match of convenience; and now, only bare civility is all they pretend to.—I am often much diſtreſſed, my dear Eliza, at the frequent bickerings between my father and brother——the *elder*, as I have often lamented to you, is not of an even and ſweet temper; the *younger*, haughty and uncontroulable.

And, of late, I have thought my papa more fretful than uſual about every trifle—I hope nothing lies upon his mind—no ſecret hoard of anxiety, that cauſes this impatience.

But I won't anticipate evils,—let me ſoon hear from you; and offer to all your family the cordial ſalutations, of

Your affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER II.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

Dear Maria,

YOUR father need not be afraid that I will ever, knowingly, miſlead your inexperienced youth; or am I fond of mentioning things, which now afford me only pain in the recital; except, hereafter, I ſhould be able to hold out ſomething, by way of beacon, to give you light to avoid ſome diſagreeable paths that I have trod before you.

I am very ſorry you feel diſtreſs on account of the jarrings of theſe perſons, in the world, moſt dear to you—but do not heighten that diſtreſs by imaginary

fears. Mr. Barlowe *may* have nothing but conſtitutional fretfulneſs to contend with; which, at *times*, prevail more than *others*; and, conſequently, makes him uneaſy to himſelf, and all about him. Indeed, my ſweet young friend's ſenſibility is ſufficiently exquiſite to nouriſh thoſe plants of a painful kind; planted by nature in her breaſt, without my cultivation—the *common* clouds of adverſity, which at times overſhadow every proſpect, will appear dark enough —Heaven ſhield you from violent and uncommon ſtorms.

My poor father ſeems declining very faſt; and tho' this event, on account of his advanced age, was every day to be expected, yet I am obliged to ſummon all my fortitude that I may bear it properly—The death of friends, is of all ſorrows the moſt pungent.—Write to me,

my

my deareſt Maria, without reſerve or affectation—I am always delighted with your letters,—and my riper years, to uſe Mr. Barlowe's phraſe, may enable me to adviſe you; as the moſt ſincere affection, founded on your amiable qualities, fills the heart of

Your ever faithful,

E. HARWOOD.

LETTER III.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

Alas! I ſhall ſoon want your conſolation—nay, I do want them already—on ſome extravagancies of my brother, juſt come to his father's knowledge, he has given him notice to prepare for going out in the world; telling him, with I think, ſome unkindneſs, that he muſt get his own bread, for he has nothing elſe to truſt to—poor Jack received ſuch an intimation with indignant tears.—How—how is this Eliza? I thought my father's circumſtances were rather great, and he has but one ſon.——Good God! —how many ſluices of ſorrow has this

ſpeech

ſpeech of my papa opened ?—How will he, dear ambitious man, as you know he is, do to deſcend ?—What my dear refractory brother, fond of pleaſure and diſſipation, and hardly to be controuled ?—What my mother-in-law, who for many years has lived a life of indulgence ?—and laſtly, what will your poor Maria do—educated as I have been, the winds of heaven ſcarce permitted to viſit my face too roughly—ſhould the bleak blaſts of penury beat hard on my tender age !

I have been talking with Mrs. Barlowe—ſhe hopes my father only threw out thoſe hints, if poſſible, to reſtrain his ſon's extravagance.——My papa, ſhe ſays, always hides every thing from her ; but, ſhe believes, he has ſerious thoughts of ſending Jack to town, and placing him in ſome mercantile way ;

and adds, they will love each other better when parted—I wiſh two, whom I love ſo well, need not be ſeparated to increaſe their affection.

Write to me very ſoon, my dear Eliza, and tell me if any thing of this kind has tranſpired in your neighbourhood—the affection that is known to exiſt between us, muſt have produced ſome mention of it in company where you have been—ſomebody, prompted by compaſſion or malevolence, would have told you.—Sure my father has been guilty of a kind of tender-cruelty, in bringing me up thus, if he knows that indigence awaits us.——But let me not arraign my deareſt parent;—affection, to me at leaſt, muſt have been his motive, however he has acted.—Alas! I am very unhappy, my dear.—Haſten,

I pray,

I pray, your intelligence; and, if poſſible, ſome conſolation to

Your ever affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER IV.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

Dear Maria,

I HAVE your affecting letter—and muſt inform you, tho' it pains me much, that common fame, which is often partly right, trumpets forth that Mr. Barlowe's affairs are in the wane; but that any thing ſo very bad will follow as you ſeem to apprehend, appears to me to be founded on your preſent dejection of ſpirits, on the firſt ſurpriſe, occaſioned by ſuch an unexpected intimation;—but do not be dejected, my dear Maria; permit me to ſay, in your father's caſe, that if his ambition does receive a little check, it may be very ſalutary in the

end.

end.——Ambition, my dear, is an inſatiable monſter—and, as to Mr. John, it may be vaſtly better for him to be tied to ſome uſeful employment—'tis often a great happineſs to ſome people, to be obliged to have that time portioned out for them, that would otherwiſe be thrown away.

As to your mother-in-law, if I know her, diſcontent has always lowered on her brow, even in the midſt of eaſe and affluence—and, in a ſituation leſs convenient, ſhe can but be diſcontented.

As to yourſelf, my ſweet girl, what mighty harm can happen to you, in an alteration in thoſe things, which your good ſenſe will tell you at once, are not eſſentials.—Suppoſe, in after-life, one cleanly attendant does all your menial offices—and can't you be as eaſy in a neat

neat waſhing gown, as a ſilken full dreſs —I am ſure you would look as handſome.—Indeed, my dear, half our wants are imaginary; not that I carry my philoſophic notions ſo far as to deny that cold and hunger are evils—yet, ſurely, fine cloaths, numerous attendants, and luxurious tables, make a pompous liſt of wants, that have no foundation in nature.

Let theſe conſiderations, my ſenſible young friend, have their due weight with you.——That heaven will give you health and competence ſhall be the conſtant prayer of

Your faithful friend,

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER V.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

I SEE the force of your arguments, which have helped to calm my mind; —that my father's affairs are in the wane, may be right enough, but that they are ſo very bad I have reaſon to diſbelieve.—My dear brother is actually gone upon trial to a Mr. Clayton, without much reluctance, and I have borne this firſt ſeparation pretty well—reconciled to it a good deal by your reaſonings on that head.——Another ſource of pleaſure too, I derive from my father's having retained a gentleman to give me ſome inſtructions in muſic—not merely

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neat waſhing gown, as a ſilken full dreſs —I am ſure you would look as handſome.—Indeed, my dear, half our wants are imaginary; not that I carry my philoſophic notions ſo far as to deny that cold and hunger are evils—yet, ſurely, fine cloaths, numerous attendants, and luxurious tables, make a pompous liſt of wants, that have no foundation in nature.

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becauſe I love muſic, but as it almoſt aſſures me, that he is not very unhappy in his circumſtances—for he would never be ſo imprudent as to be ſtill refining my education, when I am already too much refined for a very low fortune, and every polite acquiſition would but render my ſenſations more acute, and conſequently, in that caſe, more wretched.

I have finiſhed the ſuit of linen you ſo much liked—and my ever-dear papa, has given me a new luteſtring to wear with it—'tis vaſtly handſome—but no more of that—Miſs Harwood loves the perſon, but not the foibles of her Maria.

We talk of a little excurſion to ——, where, if any thing occurs which I think worth your notice, you will be ſure of it in my

my next.—I well know, by my own feelings, what yours muſt be on the near proſpect of loſing a tender parent—and ſhall not trouble you with any trite reflections—not doubting but your equanimity will be admired by all people capable of diſtinguiſhing what virtue is, as well as,

Your ever affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER VI.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

Dear Maria,

YOUR laſt could not fail of giving me pleaſure, as it indicates a quieter mind, and fewer apprehenſions than the former—enjoy the preſent hour, my dear girl, and bring not future cares into it—we are dead to yeſterday, you know, and the morrow is not yet come. Beſides, conſider *who* tells us, ſufficient to the day is the evil thereof.—Why do you abruptly break from the ſubject, when you mention your new gown, and ſuit of needlework—your time of life makes an attention to ſuch things natural and becoming, and the ſilk is but

a juſt

a juſt reward of your induſtry, exhibited in your linen. As I ſaid before, avoid reſerve and affectation—if I do not regularly anſwer every one of your charming letters, impute it not to coldneſs or inattention—I am confined to a cloſe attendance on a ſick father, and obliged to watch the laſt glimmerings of that vital lamp that gave me life—but I can't diſpenſe with your writing to me conſtantly.—If you are well at eaſe, gild the horrors of this ſick chamber by the pleaſing communication—and if clouds ariſe, give way to the ſwoln heart, and claim my warmeſt ſympathy.

May you have much pleaſure in your little journey.—Adieu, for this time, from my deareſt Maria,

Your real friend,

E. HARWOOD.

LETTER VII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

HERE we are at ———, in health and ſpirits—my father drove his lady in a phaëton, and I rode on horſeback.

You have heard me mention Mr. Freeland, his moſt intimate friend and acquaintance—his houſe is about fifteen miles from ours—he gave us a moſt kind reception.—He is a middle aged man, and has been ſome years a widower: his eldeſt daughter ſuperintends his houſhold, but was abſent on a viſit; and the younger, who is about my age, only at home.—Mr. Freeland is vaſtly fond

of

of theſe two girls, and can do very handſomely for them.—I can't ſay that Miſs Patty ſtrikes my fancy much—a heavy unmeaning countenance, of a deadly pale—I thought ſome ſparks of envy too, for a moment, threw a little unpleaſing fire in her eyes, on *her* father's complimenting *mine*, on having a grown-up girl that was paſſable and lively:—but poor thing! I fancy ſhe enjoys not good health, and if ſo, is entitled to much compaſſion—for ſickneſs will ſour the temper.—We ſhall return home to-morrow—ſo, my dear, whatever be this young lady's real character ſignifies very little to me.

I hope to be indulged with a ride frequently on horſeback, as I am exceſſively fond of it, and ſo is my father, and he loves my company.—Dear, why was I ſo gloomy—I have youth, health, and

and innocence, invaluable treaſures.—And as you, my kind monitreſs, obſerve, what mighty evil can arrive from wearing a neat but plain dreſs, and waiting on myſelf?—I hope to find a letter from you, brought in my abſence.

Good night, for it is late.—Sweet ſlumber weigh down your eyelids, as it has nearly done thoſe of,

My dear Eliza,

Your truly affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER VII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

Yours I received—heaven comfort you in the affecting taſk you are engaged in.—Indeed, my indulgent friend, I ſhall not omit writing continually, or ſtand upon any ceremonious exchange of letters.—I am too ſelfiſh to give up an advantage, ſo evidently on my ſide.

You aſked, ſometime ago, how I liked Sidney Bidulph? Why, there is abundance of pathos in it, is there not? 'Tis a ſweet melancholy ſtory.—But tell me, Miſs Harwood, for you know better than I, if theſe authors do any good

good to the glorious cauſe of virtue, when they ſo unhappily wind-up the cataſtrophe—I mean as to temporal happineſs.—Alas! the beſt of us, I doubt, at leaſt young people, by whom theſe things are chiefly read, can hardly give up the hopes of temporal rewards for virtuous actions.

Thank heaven, we have brought home with us the ſame good humour we ſet out with; and this morning my father had a letter from Mr. Clayton, Jack's maſter—he ſpeaks very well of him, and ſays he thinks him a lad of quick parts, and good capacity; and, if ſteadineſs and application be added, is very likely to make a figure in the mercantile world; and, as yet, has no fault to find with regard to ſobriety and diligence.——He appoints next week to meet my papa at ———, when the money

money he is to have with him is to be paid, and the indentures executed.

I am going to a little ball this evening, given by Mrs. Brightley, a neighbour of ours, on her ſon's coming of age, and the expiration of his apprenticeſhip.—The young gentleman has ſerved his time to a wholeſale linen-draper in London, and now comes into a very good fortune. His mother is a widow lady, with only this ſon and one daughter—our families viſit, but I never ſaw the ſon, as Mrs. Brightley is but lately come to ſettle here. Miſs Brightley is three or four years older than her brother—all the young folks in this neighbourhood are invited—my father gave me leave to go at the firſt word—ſo I am decked out in all my new fineries; and ſo inſeparable is vanity from the heart of a girl, that I own I am pleaſed

with myſelf.—But I will tear myſelf from the glaſs and the ſubject, and reflect that my dear Eliza is in affliction, and it is in ſome degree criminal to trifle thus.

When you can find a leiſure moment, tell me how you are—and that you love,

Yours,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER IX.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

IT is now ſix in the morning—I went to bed at four—but not being able to ſleep, am up again to talk to you.—Mr. Perkins, who lives about a mile off, and keeps a coach, called, accompanied by his ſiſter, to take me to Mrs. Brightley's. Great part of the company were there before us—on the carriage ſtopping at the gate, Mr. Brightley handed out Miſs Perkins, and then me—Mr. Perkins being no formal man, ſtepped into the houſe directly; and the young lady, on Mr. Brightley's quitting her hand to

aſſiſt me, followed him directly, as he was before acquainted with them. Nothing particular paſſed, but as he then led me into company, he ſaid to his mother, who came forward to receive us, I have the pleaſure of knowing Miſs Perkins, but what name, Madam, beſides that of *charming*, muſt I ſalute this young lady by?—That, Billey, is Miſs Barlowe—her papa is our near neighbour.—Charming Miſs Barlowe! ſaid he, in a low voice, bowing on my hand as I ſat down.

Now, my dear, you will ſay this poor thing is very circumſtantial about this young Brightley—I can't help it, my dear Eliza, there was ſomething very engaging in his firſt addreſs.

Coffee and tea, on the arrival of all the company, was brought in; it was a pretty

a pretty large company.—Sir George Hardy opened with Miſs Brightley, in a minuet—next Mr. Perkins, with another young lady—Mr. Rowe, an intimate friend of Mr. Brightley's, craved the honour of Miſs Perkins's hand—and Brightley beſought the favour of mine.—I bluſhed and looked fooliſh—but did as well as I could. We then fell into country dances, with the ſame partners, till twelve o'clock, when a very genteel collation awaited us in another apartment.—I think, upon the whole, my dear Miſs Harwood, I never ſpent ſo agreeable an evening.

Mr. Brightley is genteel in his perſon—and, I fancy, what moſt people would reckon handſome.—There ſeems to be a perfect harmony between him and Mr. Rowe—a good agreeable youth, rather younger than his friend. We

did not dance after ſupper, but the time ſlid away inſenſibly, till near three. Mr. Brightley ſung two or three airs in a very maſterly manner, if I, who know but little of muſic yet, may be allowed to ſay ſo.——He ſaid many pretty things, but not fulſomely complaiſant. His behaviour to his mother and ſiſter, who doat on him, was reſpectful and tender to the laſt degree.—He begged the fourth place, in Mr. Perkins's coach, to attend me home, and would not be excuſed, as it was but a little way to walk back. Dear, why did he?—My father ſat up for me, and I retired to bed immediately—but not to ſleep.—My nerves are of that texture, that after any joyous buſtle, the raiſed ſpirits will not eaſily ſubſide to a tranquil ſtate again;—I ſhan't be able, I doubt, to return to my needle to-day

—ſo

—ſo may, perhaps, cloſe this long epiſtle by and by.

We had hardly breakfaſted, when Mr. Brightley came to ſee his partner;—my father, I thought, rather reſerved, but they fell into talk and it wore off—I don't know what ailed me, but I was unwilling to leave the room, till my papa, looking a little ſtern, ſaid, child you may retire—theſe late hours, Mr. Brightley, agree ill with young country girls that have been accuſtomed to go to bed and riſe betimes.—I left them immediately—the young gentleman gave me rather a compaſſionating glance on my father's ſpeaking ſternly.—But what ſtuff is this, my amiable friend, to take up your important time with.—But did you not bid me without reſerve or affectation, deſcribe my heart in its minuteſt movements?—Mr. Brightley concluded

his viſit with deſiring the honour of my father's acquaintance, as he propoſes reſiding chiefly with his mother—having no inclination for trade; and is, as I ſaid before, now poſſeſſed of an ample fortune.

When we met at dinner, my mother, ſpeaking of Brightley, ſaid ſhe thought he was a very accompliſhed youth; and, added ſhe, I think he ſeems to have taken a liking to your daughter. For God's ſake, my dear, don't put ſuch notions in the child's head, replied he—I ſhall have her prefer the company of a young fellow to that of her father—which I cant't bear to think of.——Why, Mr. Barlowe, you don't expect but, father and brother-fond as ſhe is, ſhe will diſcover new attachments; beſides, ſhe is now ſeventeen, and if Mr. Brightley is taken with her perſon,

it

it would be no bad thing either for Maria or you—I don't ſee why ſhe may not expect as good an offer—you certainly can make her a tolerable match in point of *money*, though perhaps not adequate to him.—I ſaw a ſtorm gathering.—Improbable nonſenſe, ſays he—the fellow has the look of a rake, and I dare ſay wants not a wife, and ogles thus every pretty wench he ſees—but drop it, I beſeech you.—A ſhort ſilence enſued.—After ſome talk of indifferent matters he went to his afternoon's nap—and I to ſcribble.—But, my dear Eliza, I find involuntary ſighs eſcape me—what new troubleſome gueſt is this that ſeeks to invade my boſom?—I will aſk permiſſion to ride out in the morning—I am diſorder'd for want of ſleep.—O how I fear ſinking in your eſteem.—On looking over this long ſcroll, I think it infinitely below thoſe written ſome time

ſince.—Mr. Brightley, Mr. Brightley, officiouſly pops into almoſt every line, and my dear Jack ſeems to be forgotten. Sure, my dear Eliza, I am not growing a ridiculous creature.—In ſhort, I don't know what to ſay, only that I muſt ever be,

Your obliged and affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER X.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Miſs Harwood,

THIS day has been productive of an event, that may prove very intereſting to me.—I ſtepped this afternoon to Mrs. Wilſon's, whom you know, for ſome haberdaſhery trifles;—the George Inn, where there is a billiard table, is juſt oppoſite.—Whether Mr. Brightley ſaw me from thence, or really wanted ſomething in her way, I can't ſay, but he came in before I had got my matters, and I felt my face and neck overſpread with a deep glow the moment I heard him accoſt her—he paid his compli-

ments to me, with great eaſe—And what occaſion had I to be embarraſſed?—A violent thunder ſtorm, opportunely you'll ſay, juſt then coming, prevented my going home, and we ſat down in the ſhop—but people coming in, the good woman intreated us to walk into her parlour—Come, Miſs Barlowe, permit me to conduct you in, till the ſhower is over; I could find no excuſe, ſo in we went—I tried to look vacant, and enquired of the health of his mother and ſiſter. My ſiſter was coming to your houſe this evening, ſaid he, had it been fair, to aſk the favour of your company—my friend Rowe and I to eſcort you two ladies, to a little farm-houſe a mile or two off, to drink a ſyllabub.—But this unlucky ſtorm—though perhaps I ought not to be ſorry for it, ſince it gives me an opportunity of detaining you for a moment, which perhaps,

Mr.

Mr. Barlowe might have denied me—for there was a little ſeverity in his aſpect, was there not, my charming Miſs Barlowe, yeſterday morning, on your leaving the room?—My papa, Sir, ſaid I, is always good and indulgent, he looks upon me as, indeed I am, a very young creature, and might be fearful that my ſimplicity might cauſe ſome ſmall deviation from the ſevere rules of behaviour, which in our ſex he holds indiſpenſable, and is an incomparable judge of—eſpecially as he looks upon you as a perſon much better acquainted with the world than it is poſſible for me to be.—True, ſaid he, I knew ſomething of the London-world——but till within theſe two days, I know not what love and beauty were, thou ſoft enchantreſs, ſnatching, with vehemence, my trembling hand.—For heaven's ſake, Mr. Brightley, let me go—the rain is over—ſo with a

ſpring,

ſpring, as it were, broke from him and hurried through the ſhop, caſting a fearful look back when I got a few paces from the houſe.—I ſaw him ſtanding in the door-way, looking ſo—I don't know how he looked.——I told my mother I had been ſtopped by the rain, and running up to my room, gave way to a ſhower of tears—I wonder what made me cry.—I was ſorry and glad—frightened and pleaſed—happy and diſtreſſed—O, my dear Eliza! what would I give now to have you near me.—Write ſoon, pray do, as you value,

Yours,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XI.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

PAINFULLY intereſting as my concerns are, I ſuſpend every thing relative to myſelf, to write to my dear Maria; for, with an almoſt maternal anxiety, I perceive the tyrant Love is erecting his throne in her gentle boſom. Summon all your reaſoning powers, to repel the cruel invader.—But alas! my dear! what argument can your Eliza find that will be forcible enough? I know, too well I know his power; indeed, only the unworthineſs of the object, impowered me to expel the rapacious foe—and that not ſuddenly—for I loved,

loved, when I had ceaſed to eſteem.—This, I hope, will not be Maria's caſe—there is no improbability in ſuppoſing your many accompliſhments have ſtrongly attracted the heart of this young man. But men, my dear, have ſuch ways of counterfeiting a real paſſion, that indifferent, and unprejudiced people, are often long before they diſcover it to be unreal.—How eaſy then to deceive us in a cauſe wherein our paſſions become ſuch warm advocates?—I wiſh I could be near you—but as you have penetration, and will be vigilant, I truſt you will not be impoſed on.—Endeavour to get what lights you can concerning Mr. Brightley's character;—you ſay he behaves well to his female relations, which looks well.—Diſcourage not the advances of his ſiſter towards an intimacy, and if you find her worthy, make her a confidant.—Why ſhould you expreſs

preſs a doubt of becoming ridiculous, or fear ſinking in my eſteem.—Maria Barlowe cannot ſink in my eſteem, unleſs ſhe departs from theſe rules which the goodneſs of her underſtanding, and the rectitude of her heart, will infallibly preſcribe.

I fear, my ſweet girl, inſtead of being nearer, I ſhall be removed to a greater diſtance from you.—The event, by me ſo long dreaded, muſt ſoon take place.—And, as the conſiderable ſtipend we now enjoy, will ceaſe at my father's death, our circumſtances will be ſo much reduced, as to make it abſolutely neceſſary to retire to ſome cheap county —eſpecially as the growing infirmities of my mother will require little alleviations, not ſo eaſily procured in this dear one.—But whereſoever I am, my dear Maria's welfare will be near my heart,

and

and I ſhall implore the Supreme Being to have you in his eſpecial keeping.—I am, in truth,

Yours, moſt affectionately,

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER XII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

You plainly perceive, you ſay, that the tyrant Love is erecting his throne in my inexperienced boſom—and with an anxiety, almoſt maternal, you perceive it—thank you a thouſand times for the kind ſolicitude of that expreſſion.—But what can I do, my dear Eliza, the entrance of the path ſeems ſtrewed with roſes, and I muſt go on?—

This evening Miſs Brightley came and aſked my father and mother to ſpare me for a little walk.—And who Miſs, ſays

ſays my papa, is to be of the party?—Only my brother, Sir, and Mr. Rowe, beſides us girls.——I don't know—my girl has not been uſed to theſe parties with gay young men, and I think it time enough for her to ſeek for pleaſures without the company of her ſeniors.—I am Miſs Barlowe's ſenior, Sir, by ſome good years, returned ſhe;—and if by gay young men, you mean wild ones, I muſt take upon me to ſay, that both my brother, and Mr. Rowe, have very good characters, and are eſteemed by all their acquaintance as ſober decent youths.——I beg your pardon, Miſs Brightley—ſhe may go: I think ſo. With this half-reluctant leave, we went, and were ſoon joined by the gentlemen.—The well-known fields, where I have often been, never appeared ſo delightful before—how charming every object. Mr. Brightley had Thomſon's Seaſons

in

in his pocket, and read ſeveral paſſages with infinite grace; particularly,

> But happy they the happieſt of their kind,
> Whom gentler ſtars unite.———

On our arrival at the houſe, we had the little regale—Miſs Brightley ſtepping out to ſpeak to the good woman of the houſe, Mr. Rowe followed her;—and then, O my dear Eliza! what came next?—A thouſand pardons, aſked by him, for his abrupt manner at Mrs. Wilſon's—which my eyes granted him. Fool that I am—why did I not conceal the ſoft emotion, and look, at leaſt, indifferent?—But all I could ſay was, Sir, my papa would never forgive me if he knew I liſten'd to ſuch talk.—Sweet innocence, ſaid he, I will wait upon your father to-morrow—my mother, one of the beſt of women, admires you much.—The

fool

ſool caſt down her eyes, and curtſied.—On Miſs Brightley's return, I was exceedingly abaſh'd, for I thought he looked at her with an air of triumph.—On that, the pride of my ſex ſuggeſting, that I had not behaved with proper dignity, I grew reſerved—but then, O what tender humility appeared in his glances!—But you, my dear Eliza, know the ways of theſe men.——In ſhort, my reſerve wore off, and we returned home in the ſame ſweet way we went out.—They conducted me quite into our own parlour—and, my dear father having drank a few glaſſes of punch according to his evening cuſtom, was good-humoured, and received them with great frankneſs—my mother, courteouſly enough, intreated them to ſit.—Miſs Brightley, who is a ſprightly girl, ſaid, I have brought your daughter ſafe home, Sir.—I thank you, Madam,

and I can make no apology for my petulance, but that I am fonder of my girl than many fathers are.—Few fathers have ſuch a daughter to be fond of, replied Mr. Brightley;—to which Mr. Rowe and the young lady ſeemed to ſmile their aſſent;—my papa then called for ſome wine, and the gentlemen entering into talk, he reliſhed their converſation, and preſſed them ſtill to ſtay.—O! why did he do ſo?—for had he not, I might have gone to bed with ſome degree of ſelf-complacency, which now I want —but don't be alarmed.——My father, you know, is fond of muſic, eſpecially vocal—he aſked Mr. Brightley to ſing—he immediately obliged him—and ſung a very tender air.——I found my nerves thrill, and my heart vibrate as it were, but was reſolved not to truſt my eyes, but by a ſtrange impulſe, I think I glanced at him, and ſaw *his* fixed, and languiſhingly,

languiſhingly, on mine, and ſunk back in my chair without ſenſe or motion. I ſoon recovered my perception, and obſerved Brightley full of tender concern, and my father looking more angry than ſurpriſed;—water, ſmelling-bottle, and the uſual things in ſuch caſes, were given me. What ails you, child—you may gueſs who ſaid.—Is Miſs Barlow ſubject to theſe diſorders, Madam? aſked the young lady of my mother—No; ſhe replied, with a fooliſh ſimper, I never knew her ſo before.—Call the maid to conduct her to bed, ſaid my father.——Shall I attend you, my dear? ſaid Miſs Brightley—No thank you, madam, I am only tired with the walk, I fancy; and ſo, with a very confuſed air, I came up to my chamber.—They ſtaid but a very little time after I retired.—The family are all aſleep now but me, I believe;—and, for my poor part,

part, I feel ſuch a variety of painful ſenſations, that will prevent my getting a wink.—I fear what could Brightley think—what his ſiſter—what Mr. Rowe.——How ſhall I ſee my father in the morning?—Perhaps at this inſtant the young gentleman is pitying the love-ſick poor thing.—If I was ſure of that, I would never ſee him again.—Very true, fooliſh fluttering heart——thou ſhould'ſt ſubmit, whatever it might coſt thee.——Alas! my dear, what ailed me—I was charmed with his ſinging, and it was like "Dieing of a roſe in aromatic pain"—I am ſadly vexed—but let me look over my dear Eliza's laſt.—I have—and ſhe tells me, I can't ſink in her eſteem till I deviate from the paths of diſcretion and virtue—well, I have not ſure.—It was not imprudent to hear Mr. Brightley ſing, nor was it criminal to faint away.

And is there a likelihood of your removing to a greater distance from your weak friend?—And will the loss of your parent be aggravated by narrowing your circumstances?—Alas! my dear Eliza—but your exalted mind is equal to these things——Good night—good night.—"Ye gods who guard the innocent and guide the weak, protect and take me to your care."

But why do I adopt the pagan phrase, ye gods? I believe in one God, who knows my weakness.——I will close with beseeching *him* to take us both into *his* protection.

Your affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Miſs Harwood,

WELL, another day is over—it has not been barren of incidents.—I went down with much timidity, but my father took no notice of my diſorder laſt night;—and my ſtep-dame followed his example.—We had ſcarce done breakfaſt, when Brightley came in, and tenderly enquired how I did, and preſented his ſiſter's compliments.—I diſcovered no inſulting pity in his looks, ſo behaved with tolerable eaſe for half an hour.—He ſeemed determined to have ſome talk with my father, which my

mother intending to favour, went out, and bid me come, for ſhe wanted me; but finding ſhe had nothing particular to ſay, I went to my work, but with a palpitating heart, and unſteady fingers, as you may think——reflecting, with amazement, on the rapid progreſs of things—but a few days ſince I did not know Mr. Brightley, and now how much he engroſſes my thoughts;—a week ago, if any perſon had told me I ſhould entertain a wiſh that ſavor'd of marriage, at this early age, I ſhould have thought myſelf affronted, and have aſked what part of my conduct betrayed ſo much forwardneſs; tho' now I can't help wiſhing my father may hear him with complacency—and then what follows.—Thus talked I to myſelf, till I heard him take his leave, with ſeeming good humour on both ſides.—My mother went into the parlour, and after being ſome time together, poor

Maria

Maria was ſummoned to appear.—Well girl, ſays he, this young man has found out that you are old enough to be courted; and, I ſuppoſe, you are of the ſame opinion—I ſhall have you wiſh ſoon to deprive your father of thoſe innocent endearments, which have often ſoothed a heart for a long time paſt ill at eaſe. —I burſt into tears, my father, ſeeming to recollect himſelf, and parental fondneſs being awakend by my emotion, ſaluted me, and ſaid, Well child, I have given Brightley my permiſſion to addreſs you, and may you be as happy as you deſerve to be.—I was overcome with my father's unexpected goodneſs—and replied, God forbid, Sir, that any new attachments ſhould interfere with the ardent affection I muſt ever feel for my dear papa, or leſſen a ſenſe of my duty.——Well, well, you are a good girl, ſay no more. —My mother, who wants ſenſibility,

was unmoved at this ſcene—and ſaid, Mr. Brightley, Maria, ſays not a word about money to your father—a circumſtance that pleaſed her much; but ſure if he had, it would have been premature.—Mr. Brightley ſpent the evening here—but I will avoid minuteneſſes—only ſay, that to ſee my father and him pleaſed with each other, was an inexpreſſible pleaſure to me;—and I am now ſcribbling with more pleaſing reflections than thoſe of laſt night.—But yet, my dear father's dropping, unwarily as it were, a hint that he had been ill at eaſe for a long time paſt, diſtreſſes me.—On my father's mentioning his appointment with Mr. Clayton, in a day or two, he ſaid, ſhould you like to take a ride, Mr. Brightley, I am going to bind my ſon.—Can't we take the ladies, Sir, Miſs Barlowe will be glad to meet her brother, and the air

will

will do your lady good.—My wife can't ride on horſeback.—We can procure a carriage that will take us all four—I hope a certain happy event will make it expedient to beſpeak one of our own ſhortly.——No, Sir, ſays my papa, I prefer the equeſtrian expedition, as parſon Adam's has it. My mother, who is naturally lazy, ſaid ſhe had rather be excuſed.—Then Maria and Mr. Brightley will both accompany me on horſeback.—A motion very agreeable to me.—So I ſhan't have an opportunity of writing to my dear Eliza till after I come back; for to-morrow, Mrs. Brightley, her beloved ſon and daughter, are to dine with us; beſides, ſome other neighbours, when it will be no ſecret that the alliance of the two families is a thing likely to take place, and can it be.—And now what, my dear Eliza, think you.—Sure Brightley loves me.—

There is an oppenneſs in his manner, is there not? Indeed, every opportunity he has had of being alone with me, for we have had ſome, he has poured out his ſoul as it were in the moſt impaſſioned ſpeeches—but I forbear to repeat them, even to you, though every ſyllable is impreſſed on my memory.

Mr. Rowe is gone back to town—my heart beats high with the expectation of ſeeing my dear brother; though, I ſuppoſe, he will teize a little on account of my lover, for he has always treated me as a *mere* child, though there is but a year between us—and I am ſure John has ſome foibles that reliſh of the man.

I long for a letter from my dear Eliza—not from ſelfiſh motives entirely, for my ſympathetic heart is often prompting me to viſit idealy the bed of ſickneſs,

ſickneſs, that ties down your ſore attention.—Heaven ſupport and comfort you, and give your worthy parent an eaſy paſſage to the bliſsful regions.—Since you ſeem to think the ſtroke *near*, as it is inevitable, are the petitions daily put up by

Yours,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER XIV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

WE have been to ———, Mr. Clayton and my brother were there before us;—the gentleman ſeems to be a perſon of ſenſe and probity—I never ſaw him before.—Jack looked very ſmart. Don't you think my brother a handſome youth, Eliza?—My papa ſeemed very fond of him—he introduced Mr. Brightley to them, as one who honoured his girl with a partial regard.—The young gentleman accoſted my brother very politely—which he returned with a good grace; but looking archly, and

ſpeaking

ſpeaking low, ſaid, I hope my father has done dandling you on his knee now, Maria—what a quick progreſſion—You have thrown by your doll, no doubt.—I took it in good part, 'tis his way, and I love him.

The indentures being executed according to form, we dined in great harmony, and the glaſs circulated briſkly among the gentlemen: Brightley ſeems not much to reliſh the bottle; but with pain, I obſerve, my brother Jack is no flincher.—What an ugly ſign, for ſuch a lad to like drink, and I think he looks more rakiſh, even in this little time, than he was wont to do. Brightley gave him his friend Rowe's addreſs, and wiſhed they would commence an acquaintance.—Mr. Clayton has a round ſum with my brother, he is to ſerve but four years, being now eighteen.——I

parted with reluctance from my brother, for there always has been, you know, an uncommon affection between us.—I overheard him tell my lover, that the girl was of a good temper, and had more wit, that was his phraſe, than one h lf of her ſex.—Now, my dear Eliza, don't think me vain, the love of praiſe, you know, glows in every heart—but praiſe, from thoſe we love, is peculiarly ſweet; —it is almoſt impoſſible for one to tell one's own ſtory without appearing vain and conceited, for truth obliges one to mention the handſome things our friends and lovers ſay to us.——Mr. Richardſon, whom we both ſo much admire, no doubt deſigned his Harriet Byron for the moſt lovely character of a woman, in his laſt novel; and yet, by making her tell her own ſtory, ſhe appears a little affected.—But I am not writing a novel, only as I am unavoidably obliged to ſay

ſo

ſo much about myſelf, I was ſtruck with the conſciouſneſs of appearing, to you *only* though, pert and affected; and yet I am humbled and fearful, at times, leſt Brightley ſhould think me an inſignificant girl. We rode home delightfully ——" The moon unveil'd her peerleſs light;" and my lover, cloſe as he could ride, whiſpering the ſofteſt things.—Blame me not, my dear Eliza, if I gave way to a little exultation—but, believe me, I do not wiſh to proceed precipitately in an affair of this vaſt moment. I might have mentioned, that when Mrs. Brightley dined here, ſhe ſeemed quite pleaſed with her ſon's aſſiduities—but I do not think her a perſon of fine feelings—ſhe is a well bred lady, and I dare ſay if I ſhould become Mrs. Brightley, will treat me as ſuch, eſpecially if I am beloved by her dear ſon;—but I do not take her to be one,

" Who

" Who often wipes her eyes of precious drops which ſacred pity hath engendered."

Brightley almoſt lives here;—and a lady, who has made ſome figure in the annals of love, ſays, a man of a ſanguine conſtitution may be violently fond, or if he be profuſe, may make me valuable preſents.—But *he* that gives me his *time*, gives me the moſt convincing proof of his affection.——On our excurſions abroad at this delightful ſeaſon of the year, when the young ſummer is putting forth all her charms, how natural is it to look up with gratitude to the Almighty Hand that formed the enchanting ſcenes; and I wiſh, with all my heart, I could perceive a propenſity of that kind in Mr. Brightley.—For ſure, my dear Eliza, it is much to be deſired, that people united in ſuch cloſe bands,

ſhould

ſhould have ſimilar ſentiments in thoſe particulars which are important beyond all others; but when I endeavour to give the converſation that turn, he ſmiles and ſays, Maria, you are a good girl, and introduces ſome other topick —this uſed to be the caſe when Jack and I took a walk.——Bleſs me, one would think the tenets of Mahomet were inverted by our young men, or do they believe that neither ſex have ſouls.

Mr. Brightley goes to town to-morrow for ſome days, and I own ingenuouſly that I ſhall number the hours of his abſence—he paints the horrors of parting from *me* in very lively colours.—If this match takes place, perhaps, for I believe he is no ſordid man, I may be able to give myſelf the exalted pleaſure of

doing ſome pecuniary ſervices to my ever dear Eliza.—What is a coach?—A bauble.—What are fine cloaths and trinkets, when compared with the power of fulfilling the duties of friendſhip, and mitigating the diſtreſſes of the indigent?

I ſhall write on, when I have any thing material to ſay, but not teize you with an inſipid journal of every day; ſo if you hear nothing from me for a week or ſo, you may imagine I riſe in the morning, breakfaſt, play a little on my inſtrument, work at my needle, read to my father, think often of Brightley, very frequently on you, put up a mental ejaculation that Jack may be a good boy—dine and ſup, go to bed and dream of dear Brightley, but not till I have humbly prayed that every one I

love

love may be the care of Omnipotence, particularly my dear Eliza; for I am,

Most affectionately yours,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

I HAVE a letter from my lover, juſt ſuch a one as I wiſhed for—I have read it over a thouſand times. You know it was always a maxim with us, that the letters of a perſon gave great inſight into their character—he is certainly a man of ſenſe—my father aſked me to ſhew it him, I made no ſcruple; he ſaid he was happy enough in his expreſſion, there was fire ſufficient; but ſure warmth in this caſe is to be excuſed, at leaſt it is what I can forgive: he intreats me to write to him, and adds, *that* is the only thing which can make his

his longer ſtay ſupportable.—Though he has not yet done his buſineſs, I ſhall write to him, my dear—for why ſhould I ſtifle the ſoft emotion of my heart, ſince I am not conſcious of any diſpoſitions but what are warranted by virtue?

I have written—my father did not aſk to ſee my anſwer.—Mr. Brightley informed me, he had ſpent one evening with my brother, who promiſed me a letter by him.——I claim your felicitations, my generous friend, on theſe agreeable proſpects; for freely to own my ſentiments, I think that of wife to a man one loves, is the moſt eligible of all ſituations;—upon my word I have no fondneſs for power, which ſome ſay is the reigning paſſion of our ſex. If Brightley proves but a good maſter, it is all I wiſh: the word obey will never ſtick in my ſtomach——Providence deſigned

ſigned us to ſweeten the private walks of life, and not to aſſume maſculine airs of government—I have been uſed almoſt implicitly to obey my father, and he has rewarded me with affection, more than paternal—and I ſometimes think, that if I ſhould be deprived, by death, of the ſhelter of his indulgent wing before a connection of this kind had been formed —whither ſhould I fly—no relations in the world but my uncle Barlowe, a good natured man, but much given to drink, and entirely under the dominion of an ill-principled woman of a termagant temper.—My mother was an only child, her parents did not long ſurvive her loſs—my papa never had but the brother I mention, and they were left orphans very young.—But you know all theſe circumſtances; I only juſt touch on them, that you may ſee how eligible and advantageous this affair ſeems to be

for

for your poor Maria; and, indeed, above all, Brightley has a powerful advocate in my boſom—I wiſh the time of his return near, as it *is* were come.—I don't think theſe men, the fondeſt of them, are capable of feeling the very refined ſenſations that the better ſort of females do; their definitions of love are coarſe——but I ſhall bewilder myſelf, though I know what I *mean*, and ſo do you too, Eliza.

Well, to-morrow evening I am to expect him—and if he does not ſeem as glad to ſee me as I am to ſee him—What then?—Why I ſhall ſigh.—Good bye, my dear, you will ſoon have another ſcroll from

Yours,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XVI.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

I SHALL anſwer my dear Maria's laſt circumſtantially, for I have now time to do it.—The remains of my venerable parent were interr'd laſt night; my ſorrow, on the occaſion, is rather calm than pungent—but if I am grave, my ſweet girl muſt not impute it to an incapacity of taſting her joys.——An event of this kind, where there is no conſanguinity, is apt to place things in their true colours, and makes us ready to cry out, with the Pſalmiſt, Lord, What is man?——But enough.

As

As you ſay, my good girl, I wiſh you could diſcover an innate principle of piety in the young man—but it is not the faſhion of the times to diſplay ſuch ſentiments; you muſt allow for cuſtom —he may have a very good heart, and you will make him better.—Felicitate you, I do moſt heartily on your agreeable proſpects. I believe, Maria is better formed for a wife than her friend. —Such a yielding diſpoſition, muſt procure you good-treatment from a man that has a ſpark of good-nature—but the leaſt degree of moroſeneſs to your ſenſibility, would, in all probability, ſhorten your days: on the contrary, I could return contempt for an indifference, I was unconſcious of deſerving, and not let it frighten me or break my ſpirits. To be ſure, my dear Maria, that very timidity of yours, joined to the lonelineſs of your ſituation, ſhould you

loſe

loſe your father, makes this connection very deſirable;—I doubt not your readineſs, my amiable young friend, to do me ſervice if you have power, and my neceſſity calls for it.——Now a word of our own affairs—my mother bears the ſeparation from a huſband, with whom ſhe has lived lovingly for a great number of years, without any violent emotions; but old peoples paſſions become blunted by time; and the frequency of ſeeing the devouring grave ſwallow up ſo many of their friends and acquaintance, renders it to them common and unaffecting.—My ſiſter's admirer, whom you know, and who has been conſtant for a long time, is to be rewarded, as they phraſe it, when ſhe has appeared once or twice in the trappings, and the ſuit of woe; and theſe, as her moderate portion will be withdrawn from the common ſtock, my mother, whom I will

not

not quit, and I, ſhall retire to ſome country in or bordering upon Wales — You will hardly ever, my dear Maria, know me by any other name than that of Eliza Harwood.—I once thought as you do, and had ſketched out a pleaſing picture of domeſtic happineſs, but the principal figure in the piece ſhewing an ugly face, I tore the outlines—and in truth I am aiming at more ſublime fervours, and hope to find the middle way between flights of enthuſiaſm and frigid apathy; to look upon the world merely as a ſtage, and yet to melt at woe, or ſmile at humour: that my Maria will play her part well, I doubt not—and, may the grand maſter of the drama, allot you an eaſy one.—I hope to have the pleaſure of congratulating you on this important affair before we go; and, in the meantime, haſten your letters, for they

afford the higheſt amuſement any thing here is is capable of, to

Your true friend,

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER XVII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

MY lover returned laſt night—our meeting was rapturous on both ſides—he has purchaſed ſome trinkets for me, which I gratefully accepted; but I may ſay, without arrogance, (may I not, Betſey) that my mind is above ſuch things; that is, they weigh nothing in the ſcale of my affections, and I am ready to ſay, "My love give me thine heart."—My brother has ſent me a letter and a fine pair of buckles; I hope he is growing an economiſt, that he can afford to make a preſent of this value.—But I muſt break off, Eliza—Mr. Brightley and his ſiſter came to fetch me to make one at the

card-table—I hate cards at any time, eſpecially at this ſeaſon, when the ſetting-ſun, the melody of birds, the fragrancy of bloſſoms, after a new fallen ſhower, combine to make the evening walk delightful.—But not a word more till I return.

Here I am, my dear Eliza—the evening could not be diſagreeable with the man I love—I ſuppoſe all money matters are ſettled, for Mrs. Brightley received me with much politeneſs.—Matrimony, ſays a great wit, who has condeſcended to pun, is a matter of money—but I hope not altogether ſo here. I wiſh this lady were not quite ſo well-bred—good-breeding, my dear, gives a ſameneſs to all characters—one muſt be very intimate with a fine lady before one can diſcover the real woman.—Sure it is deſirable for the mother of one's huſband to be more affectionate

affectiontae than complaiſant; but Brightley once told me, ſhe liked me very much,—and I will endeavour to believe him.

Both the ladies talked about cloaths—I ſaid, my firſt ambition was to appear agreeable to Mr. Brightley; and my ſecond, that it might be ſuitable to the ſtation of his wife, and ſo as to do no diſcredit to his other connexions—only I wiſhed not to be too fine.—The elder lady ſaid I talked very prudently, and ſhe thought Mr. Barlowe could do no leſs than ſet me off handſomely in that particular—you muſt have a ſuit of cloaths, Miſs Barlowe, and a negligee to receive company in.—Indeed, dear madam, returned I, with deference to your better judgment, I ſhould be very glad to be excuſed wearing a hoop, and ſhould think a night-gown dreſs enough for home.——Mr.

Brightley was of my opinion, and ſaid he hated a buckram full-dreſs; and, with my conſent, added he, my Maria's beautiful hair ſhall never be tortured with irons, or diſguiſed with powder—I returned no anſwer but a ſmile—my lover conducted me home.—I told my father our converſation, to which he made no anſwer.

I am ſure, my dear Eliza, I ſhould abhor the thoughts of unreaſonably encreaſing my dear papa's expence—cloaths, nonſenſe.——Good night, my amiable friend—I won't cloſe here, for ſomething tells me to-morrow will bring me a letter.—I propheſied right—how very kind you are, my dear Miſs Harwood, in the midſt of this recent affliction to anſwer your Maria's letter ſo circumſtantially.—You account, very naturally, for your mother's hearing well, what, to me, ſeems

the

the greateſt of all misfortunes.——May the union between Miſs Jenny and Mr. Fiſher be productive of much happineſs to all.—Don't ſay, Eliza, I ſhall never know you by any other name.—I ſhall convince you, by happy experience, ſome time hence, I truſt, that a married life is beſt. Our beloved Shakeſpeare, you know, ſays, that

Earthlier happier is the roſe diſtill'd,
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn,
Lives, grows, and dies in ſingle bleſſedneſs.

But now you are aiming at more ſublime fervour, you think earthly happineſs below your care.—I wartant you, we have no reaſon to think, Eliza, but bright crowns are reſerved hereafter for the virtuous married woman, as well as for the cold and ſnowy veſtal.— I wiſh not to travel ſolus towards that better country; nor would you, my dear, if

the unworthy Aſhford had not proved unworthy—but don't be angry with me, you are infinitely above me in every thing, and will ſoon reach an eminence, and I ſhall gaze at you from an awful diſtance.

Well, my dear, the important article of dreſs is ſettled—a pale pink, with aſlight running pattern of ſilver—a white ſatin, with ſuitable linen and ornaments—fine enough of all conſcience ſurely; and it is likewiſe agreed, that we are to live alternately with my dear father and Mrs. Brightley—the firſt three months here, and then as long with her—whether this ſcheme will anſwer ſalutary purpoſes time will determine—I think it my duty to acquieſce.—The day is not abſolutely fixed, but it won't be long.—But O, my dear! ſuch creatures as I am, are not the happieſt of human beings; this

ſoil,

ſoil, my breaſt, as you ſay, is fertile enough to produce plants of a painful nature—I look forward towards this momentous concern with a ſtrange mixture of hope and fear; and am often ſaying, with Brutus,

Between the acting of an important [not dreadful] thing,
And the firſt motion, all the interim is
Like a phantaſma, or a hideous dream:
The Genius, and the mortal inſtruments
Are then in council; and the ſtate of man,
Like to a little kingdom, ſuffers then
The nature of an inſurrection.

For if Brightley ſhould grow indifferent, or cloy'd with love, (for I muſt be tender) what will become of me?—I am ready to fancy, even now, that he is too gay and eaſy to be much in love.—

—Oh, he has caught
My fooliſh heart; and like a tender child,
That truſts his play-thing to another hand,
I fear its harm, and fain would have it back.

Thus do I haraſs myſelf, for ever mentally ſpouting, and the next time he comes my doubts all vaniſh, and I am full of ſelf-accuſations for harbouring a thought that he can ever be inconſtant——then again, the ſelf tormentor reflects, that in point of circumſtances, ſhe is much below him——then I quit my ſcruples by firmly reſolving, that if any ſudden and unforeſeen calamity ſhould ſtrip Mr. Brightley of his every ſhilling, my love and faith ſhould be unſhaken; and, if a monarch was to *ſolicit* for my favour, it would be in vain.

I have not ſeen my lover to-day, he went out betimes this morning to hunt, I ſuppoſe the chace was long, and they had good ſport. My father has been chearful a good while, his lady mightily pleaſed with the thoughts of a wedding—you will perceive, Eliza, I am a little in the ſpleen.

Well,

Well, it is gone off my dear.—Heaven guard my dear Brightley wherever he be.—I have been playing to my father, and he is gone to bed, and ſeems, dear ſoul, "ſhut up in meaſureleſs content". You will not omit adviſing me of the place of your abode as ſoon as you know it yourſelf—and I will endeavour to think you at no greater diſtance than you are at preſent—and my pen ſhall ſtill continue to convey to my dear Eliza the moſt ſacred receſſes of the heart of your

Affectionate

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER XVIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

O, MY dear Eliza!—But my eyes muſt ceaſe flowing before I can go on—my dear father is in durance—but he will ſoon be at home again—thank heaven he is come in.—I will give you the ſhocking incidents of this day as ſoon as I can.

Laſt night, as I told you, the dear man went to bed in ſeeming high ſpirits, he roſe pretty early, and went to the George for a draught of wormwood ale, (which he drinks by way of medicine,) and a bailiff, who had been lurking about the

houſe, followed and arreſted him;—he immediately ſent to Dr. Goodall, and a meſſenger to let my mother know ſhe ſhould not wait breakfaſt; but the thing was ſo public, that the waiter who came to our houſe gave her ſufficient room to think ſomething extraordinary detained him—ſhe conjured him to tell her—Mr. Barlowe is arreſted, madam, and in cuſtody—She flew up to my room—your father is in the hands of a bailiff, Maria—Good God, madam, how? where? Why at the George.—O heavens! I will fly to him directly.—What good will your going do, child? I made her no anſwer, but ſnatching my hat without feeling the ground I trod on, inſtinctively, as it were, went to the room, where ſat my dear father with a naſty ill looking fellow, and the maſter of the houſe.——I could not ſpeak for a moment; but on his ſaying, what brought you here child? (with an

apparent

apparent ſtruggle to conceal his own affliction) I anſwered, O ſir! and the tears guſhed out, which immediately produced the ſame emotion in him.—The landlord, who ſeems a good-natured man, ſaid, don't diſtreſs yourſelf, Miſs Barlowe, Dr. Goodall is coming to your papa, and he and I ſhall ſoon releaſe him. God bleſs you, ſaid I; but, dear ſir, how, how is it?—Go home my dear girl, and I will come to breakfaſt preſently.—I did ſo, and wrote the two or three alarming lines that began this letter. But O, what a breakfaſt! My mother-in-law, with the air of a perſon that thought herſelf injured, rather than the ſympathizing wife—what a diſgrace, ſays ſhe it is, Mr. Barlow, for you to be arreſted in this public manner! What debt is it? Why do you hide your affairs from me?—You know he has not much love for her, and was too uneaſy juſt then to bear her upbraidings.—

Well,

Well,, well, ſaid he, your curioſity will ſoon be ſatisfied, but in a way you will not like.—I then ſpoke.—For heavens ſake, madam, let us not aggravate our afflictions by family diſcord, you ſee my dear father has an inward hoard of anguiſh, let you and I join our endeavours to perſuade him to relieve his own mind, by telling us—and let us join in conſoling him, let it be what it will.—O, my dear child! for your ſake principally is my heart rent, when I reflect that I am ruined.—A violent burſt of grief, which ſeemed to rend his heart indeed, prevented his ſaying more. Dear ſir, be compoſed, and tell us all; no mighty harm can befall me, while my papa is in health and at liberty. Ay, do Mr. Barlowe, ſaid ſhe, (a little moved) compoſe yourſelf and tell us all —Why this debt is but an inconſiderable one, my friend Goodall and Foreman have given bail,

but

but I owe nearly all that I am worth in the world; but your ſettlement, you know, Mrs. Barlowe, is ſafe—my affairs have been growing worſe and worſe for ſome years; there has been a combination of unlucky circumſtances to bring about this total ruin, *all* of which I can't at preſent enumerate—I have been bound in a very large ſum for my brother, which I was obliged to pay, I have engaged in ſome expenſive projects that have miſcarried, I have been impoſed on by ſome people in whom I truſted; in ſhort, I am an unfortunate man, and in ſome meaſure culpable; for if I had retrenched ſome years ago, a competency would have remained—I have been continually drawing out the principal of the large capital you thought ſecured in the funds—my land is mortgaged, but not quite for its value; I owe money in bond——the premium Mr. Clayton received

ceived with Jack, I was obliged to borrow—I am indebted to ſeveral trades people——But if I give up every thing which I am reſolved to do, I hope and believe no trader will be a loſer.—The fear of giving pain to thoſe I love, the hopes of ſeeing Maria happily married, has been the cauſe of my concealing theſe things.

My mother, with a countenance expreſſive of the moſt glooming diſcontent, anſwered, Lord, Mr. Barlowe, what ſhall we do? You know my jointure is but eighty pounds a year—as for your daughter, I ſuppoſe that things are gone ſo far, *ſhe* will be well provided for.—But, for goodneſs ſake, how have you managed with Mr. Brightley in relation to her fortune; his mother ſeems not averſe to the match, but I fancy ſhe would not like her ſon ſhould marry a

wife

wife without a portion. My father ſaid, Brightley never directly aſked me what I would give her, but I hinted that I could not ſpare any thing like an adequate while I lived, nor ſhould I expect any ſettlement for Maria——he ſaid, we were of a mind in that particular, and he wiſhed that no woman ever was to have a great fortune, as then beauty and merit would not ſo frequently be overlooked, nor would there be that confounded parade with parchment and nonſenſe; adding, I ſhall be rich enough in Maria Barlowe. I could not, my dear Eliza, but feel an internal ſatisfaction at this part of my dear father's talk, tho' ſeverely tortured at his diſtreſſes.

Dr. Goodall has been here, and adviſed my father to take a minute ſurvey of all his matters, and if poſſible to-morrow evening give him a liſt of his creditors.

The

The doctor, you know, underſtands all matters of buſineſs as well as thoſe of a higher nature. He ſaid the affair of the morning had reached Mrs. Brightley, and he dared to ſay we ſhould hear from her.—We ſat down to a melancholy dinner, from which I am juſt retired, and have ſcribbled over theſe particulars.—But where is Brightley all this time?—Be ſtill my impatient heart! he will come at night to be ſure.—Mrs. Brightley's ſervant has been here with a cold and civil meſſage, of how Mr. Mrs. and Miſs Barlowe did.—Is your maſter come home, John? (aſked your poor friend, with red eyes, for I have wept all day) No, madam, we expected him laſt night, but he is not yet come. We returned for anſwer to his lady's polite enquiry, that we were pretty well, and much obliged to her for ſending.—Unfeeling woman! this was her way I ſuppoſe of letting

letting us know ſhe was no ſtranger to our misfortunes; ſure her beloved ſon will not thank her for this piece of good breeding.—But am I not captious? She might think we were greatly ſhocked—but methinks Miſs might have come herſelf, and have applied the balm of a little friendly converſation to my wounds—I I ſhould have done ſo had our caſes been reverſed.—O, my dear Eliza! that you were but here, you would patiently bear the petulancies forced from me by vexation, and permit me to pour out my ſoul. Now Brightley will have it in his power to ſhew the world that he loves me *indeed*, ſince he will take a beggar to his arms. O that he were come home, that I might ſob out my gratitude on his dear boſom! Alas, Eliza! a whole dutiful long life will hardly be ſufficient for me to diſcharge the vaſt obligation he will lay upon me.—I told you lately, that if he

were

were ſtripped of his every ſhilling I would prefer him to a monarch; and I told you truth, for then, heaven knows, I little expected this ſad reverſe of fortune.

I want to write to Jack, but have not the heart to convey ill tidings to him poor youth. How will his haughty ſpirit brook it? Pray God he runs not into vicious extremes—but why ſhould I torment myſelf with the very darkeſt views. Come, dear Brightley, and chace away theſe diſmal phantoms. It is late at night, my dear Eliza, and no Mr. Brightley.—If he be come to his mother's, ought he not to have flown to his drooping Maria. I know not what to think, I would have ſent to enquire if he were returned, but my heart diſdained at this time to ſend to Mrs. Brightley's.

So—

So—here am I in my ſolitary chamber, with the proſpect of a ſleepleſs night. My dear father has been buſied ſome hours in following the directions of the worthy Doctor Goodall, and ſeems calmer than he was—our good lady, I believe, in packing and ſecuring ſome valuable movables ſhe calls hers—but here I will cloſe this melancholy ſcrawl.

Heaven bleſs my dear Eliza, and take care of the ſorrowful

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I HAVE not had power to write a word theſe two days, my dear Eliza, ſuch diſtreſs of mind have I laboured under—bad indeed muſt it be when I can't write.—O Brightley! but I will aim at ſome method--I broke off laſt with telling you my dear unhappy parent was putting his affairs in the beſt order he could, and it appears by the ſale of all his effects, beſides the neceſſary houſhold furniture, every body may be paid.—Doctor Goodall knows a gentleman of good fortune who wants to make a purchaſe in theſe parts, to whom, with my father's concurrence, he has written.—

Our

Our ſervants have notice to provide themſelves; ſo our tranſition from affluence to bare neceſſaries will be almoſt inſtantaneous——and all theſe things, my dear Eliza, I ſee tranſacted with an indifference that borders upon ſtupefaction.——Mr. Brightley's conduct is the mighty trouble that ſwallows up all the reſt—Seeing nothing of him all day, yeſterday my impatience grew to ſuch a height, that pride gave way to love, and I ſent a note requeſting an interview of half an hour with Miſs Brightley; ſhe obligingly came with the ſervant, who brought her up to my room; ſhe ſeemed affected with the anguiſh my countenance expreſſed, and without any apology or preamble, I ſaid, for God's ſake, my dear Miſs Brightley, is your brother well, have you heard any thing of him—Some of the gentlemen that went out with him, my dear, told us he went home with Sir

George

George Hardy.—I received a line from him this morning, intimating that he had a ſudden call to London. What! did he not mention me.—No; it was but a word or two I tell you.—Ah! Miſs Brightley—but he could not then know that we were ruined.—I wept—ſhe wiped her eyes.—What can I do for you, Miſs Barlowe? O nothing, madam.—If your brother wavers, nobody can do me any ſervice.—Don't be impatient, you don't know what momentous affair may have called him—take courage, my mamma is almoſt ſure my brother's attachment to you will not receive the leaſt alteration from Mr. Barlowe's miſfortune—if he comes home this evening I will appriſe you of it—but I dare ſay he will come to you the firſt moment—Then, careleſsly opening a band-box in which were ſome fripperies deſigned for the wedding, admired them; but ob-

ſerving I could not attend to ſuch trifles, looked at her watch, ſaying it was near ten—I wiſh you a good night, my dear; pluck up your ſpirits, all things may turn out better than you expect, and I heartily wiſh they may.—But I run into minuteneſſes.—Alas, my dear Eliza! I am glad to be able to write—it a little diverts the attention.

My dear father, in tenderneſs to me I believe, has never expreſſed any ſurpriſe at Brightley's unuſual abſence.—Another tedious day is paſt, in which I have numbered the tardy moments, and no news of my lover—but why do I fondly call him my lover? To be ſure he loves me not, and his ſpecious mother has found ſome method of letting him know our misfortunes.—But I will go down and eaſe my burſting by complaining to my papa.

O heavens!

O heavens! my father thinks that all Brightley's vows will vaniſh into air.—I could freely, my dear Eliza, continue my epiſtolary lamentations through the night, but am really indiſpoſed, having neither eat or ſlept for the two laſt days; ſo I will go to bed and try to lie ſtill if I ſleep not, and proceed in the morning.

O my true friend! when ſhall I know peace again. The following letter is juſt brought me by the poſt:

MADAM,

I hope the uprightneſs of my intention will be a ſufficient excuſe for the trouble of this;—ever ſince I had the pleaſure of knowing Miſs Barlowe, her many agreeable qualities have attached me to her, and it was with infinite concern I heard yeſterday of the cloud which at preſent invelops your houſe—but conſolation

on that acccount is not my prime motive in writing, it is to acquaint you with a a circumſtance which I fear will more ſenſibly affect you.

For near a year before the expiration of Mr. Brightley's time, he became acquainted with a Miſs Fanſhaw, a young lady no ways his inferior, and to whom he ſeemed pretty zealouſly attached; I have made one in ſeveral of their parties, and have heard him frequenty ſpeak warmly in her favour, and always thought the lady had a great regard for him; but for a few weeks before we ſet out for the country, I obſerved he ſlackened in his attention; I mentioned it, he made an evaſive anſwer—and I had no right to queſtion him further.—On his meeting you at the ball given by his mother, he was prodigiouſly ſtruck—you know what followed; and he told me

me with raptures, that he flattered himſelf the progreſs he had made in your favour was as rapid as his own paſſion had been, and believed he had kindled as fervent a flame as it was poſſible ſuch a delicate young creature could feel; and was ſo charm'd with that inſtance of your ſenſibility while he was ſinging, that he ſwore he would marry you if he could.—I again aſked him how the affair ſtood between him and Miſs Fanſhaw—O, ſays he, I ſhall eaſily be off there—I never was in love till now.—I own, my dear Miſs Barlowe, I was pleaſed with the thoughts of my friend's being likely to win ſuch a lady, and had a letter or two from him after my return to town filled with exulting expreſſions of his happineſs.——But laſt week, as I was dreſſing to go out, my ſervant told me a young lady enquired for me, I bid him ſhew the lady in—

and who ſhould it be but Miſs Fanſhaw—I aſked what had procured me the honour of a viſit from her.—Why, Sir, you are no ſtranger to Mr. Brightley's long attachment to me, have been witneſs to his aſſiduities, are his moſt intimate friend, and know all his motions, and I come to be certainly informed by you if he is on the point of marriage with a young lady in the country.—Yes, Madam, I replied, without heſitation, I believe the day is fixed.—She burſt into tears, and full of indignation, anſwered, no, Mr. Rowe, while I live he can never give his hand to another without my conſent.—I was thunderſtruck, and ſaid, I never imagined, Miſs Fanſhaw, that my friend's engagement to you had been of ſuch a nature—and I am convinced he loves that young lady moſt paſſionately.—Well, Sir, ſays ſhe fretfully, the end of my viſit to you is anſwered.—

ſwered.—I waited on her to the door, and immediately wrote to Brightley, and gave him the particulars of this interview; I had no anſwer for ſeveral days; when he did write, it was to let me know he would be here at ſuch a time, which he accordingly was.—I accoſted him very ſeriouſly, and aſked what he meant by treating two deſerving women in that manner, and how he propoſed to proceed.—To tell you the truth Rowe, I don't know what to do—I loved Nancy Fanſhaw extremely well a good while, and did all in my power to make her believe ſo, and I believe ſhe regards me more than I wiſh ſhe did.—You have been witneſs to the ardour of my declarations ſince to Maria Barlowe, and that charming girl has owned ſhe loves me—but I don't know how it is, when a bleſſing appears to be within my reach, it loſes its power of attraction; and I fan-

cy I ſhall do juſtice to both by marrying neither.—I expreſſed my indignation, and aſked him how he would bear the ſtings of remorſe if any ill conſequences ſhould follow.—Why I hope no very bad conſequences will follow; I muſt ſee Nancy ſometimes, and when ſhe knows the match is broke off, ſhe will be happy.—And as for Maria, her piety will do much for her; beſides, to do her merit juſtice, ſhe deſerves a much better huſband than it is in my power to make her.—I have a value for Brightley, Miſs Barlowe, and though I abhor his infidelity, was too eaſily reconciled to him.—I declared I would write to you directly, but he extorted a promiſe that I would not till I ſaw him again.—Yeſterday, as I ſaid before, I heard the melancholy account of Mr. Barlowe's troubles, and waited with impatience till evening, when Brightley promiſed to call on me. He ſaid he

was

was but juſt come from Miſs Fanſhaw, and had with much ado ſilenced her clamours.—I told him of Mr. Barlowe, he was greatly affected, and replied, now the ſweet girl will think me a ſordid raſcal, and that I break with her for dirty conſiderations—I can't bear to be deſpiſed by her neither—Curſe on my folly and inconſtancy.——I thought, my amiable young Lady, giving you a particular account of this converſation, would be the beſt excuſe I could make for my friend, ſo far as to clear him of ſo low a baſeneſs; but I have not a word to ſay by way of extenuation in the other caſe.

While Brightley was with me, your brother came in, but as there are two doors to my inner room, I beſought Mr. Brightley not to ſee him, and he went away.—The young gentleman was full of grief an vexation, and I thought a lit-

tle fluſtered, which I was not ſurpiſed at; for when the mind is ruffled by any croſs accidents, we become much ſooner intoxicated.—I enquired of your health—Poor girl; ſhe is well for ought I know, but I dare ſay broken hearted about her father, though I think ſhe is better off than any of us, for Brightley will never be ſuch a ſcoundrel as to deſert her now. I waved the ſubject, and he, not ſuſpecting I had ſo lately ſeen Brightley, after drinking a glaſs or two, took his leave.

I will make no farther apology, dear Miſs Barlowe, for this long letter; the ſuſpence you have been in for ſeveral days muſt have been almoſt inſupportable; this epiſtle will in ſome meaſure put you out of that—I abhor the thoughts of teizing you with trite conſolations, whilſt your hurts are ſo recent; only I will juſt add,

that

that if there be any thing within the verge of my abilities that can be of ſervice to you, it will give me the higheſt pleaſure to obey your commands.

I am, Madam,

Your friend,

And moſt obedient

humble ſervant,

EDWARD ROWE.

I will ſuppoſe, my dear Eliza, that you have read Mr. Rowe's letter—Gracious heaven, what ſhall I do!—So there is another perſon that has a prior claim to the heart of *that* man that has the whole poſſeſſion of mine.—O, my dear! from what a height of happineſs is your poor Maria fallen; I think I could have met indigence with ſome degree of fortitude,

but to be thus deceived where I treaſured up my ſoul—O it is too much!—Alas! how is the face of every object around me changed?—Is it poſſible a creature without guilt could ſo ſoon become ſo totally joyleſs?—Fooliſh, credulous girl; I ſhould have reflected it was poſſible he might have ſeen a thouſand women my ſuperiors, before he knew me, and it was not likely he ſhould remain inſenſible till then.—Mr. Rowe, you ſee, is very deſirous of clearing him from imputations, that ſavour of pecuniary baſeneſs—but it matters not--he has premiditately murdered my peace.—But I muſt break off for the preſent.--My father aſked me for the letter brought by the poſt—I put it into his hands with abundance of tears—he read it quite thro'; then with the kindeſt accent took me by the hand—My dear child, that piety which this vile fellow allows you to have, joined with your utmoſt

moſt efforts, will ſoon compoſe you; and I am ſure it will be giving you a powerful motive to look up and be chearful, when I ſay my happineſs is bound up in you, and by afflicting yourſelf you will add diſtreſs to your already afflicted father.—Poor Jack——Brightley had beſt keep out of his way, he will not tamely brook the indignity offered to his ſiſter. I retired, ſaying, I hoped to ſee him in a calmer diſpoſition.—True, my dear Eliza, to be able to give my father pleaſure, has been my higheſt felicity before I ſucked in the honied poiſon of Brightley's tales.

I am infinitely obliged to Mr. Rowe that my brother ſaw him not, the conſequences of an explanation between them, terrifies me but to think on;—the unhappy youth was in liquor it ſeems;

ſeems; I dreaded his knowing the ſtate of things, and foreſaw the effect it would have on him.——Alas! I am environed with calamity.

I wonder if Miſs Brightley knows any thing of this Miſs Fanſham, I think I will go and ſhew her Mr. Rowe's letter—why ſhould I conceal it.

Juſt come from Mrs. Brightley's, Eliza; the elder lady received me with much form, and a kind of pity that hurt me.—I have heard of your ſon, madam, by his friend, and put the letter into her hand——She read it with great compoſure; and then, with your leave, Miſs Barlowe, my daughter ſhall ſee it—by all means, madam—When Miſs had read it——Do you know any thing of this young lady, Sukey? Yes, madam, I have

ſeen

ſeen her, but thought the affair between her and my brother had not gone to any length.—Who is ſhe? The only daughter of Mr. Fanſhaw, the merchant in in Lothbury. What, your papa's old acquaintance, that uſed to keep him out ſo—I was never very intimate with him; and if I ever heard that he had a daughter, have forgot it. But, ſeeming to recollect herſelf, I am very ſorry for you, Miſs Barlowe; and I hope you will do us the juſtice to believe we had no hand in it.——My ſon is too much like other young gentlemen, fickle and unſteady in his attachment; but I am ſure, with Mr. Rowe, that the alteration in your family would never have wrought any change in his ſentiments with regard to you.—I am not ſorry, Madam, I replied, to find Mr. Brightley incapable of ſo ſordid a conduct; but you will allow his

his treatment of me admits of very little extenuation——but (thank God) I can wiſh him happier than he has made me. She aſked me to drink chocolate, which I declined, and took my leave immediately.

I plainly perceive, my dear Eliza, that ſhe is pleaſed at her ſon's forſaking me, and I thought Miſs Brightley (by ſome looks ſhe gave her mother) not diſpleaſed—ſhe hoped we ſhould continue good friends—ſhe ſhould always be glad to ſee me.—I could not hide the burſting tear—and ſhall, I believe, trouble them with very little of my company.

I ſhall write to Mr. Rowe, and thank him for his friendly offers——The only inſtance of which, at preſent is, that he will convey a little box to his friend, in which

which I ſhall ſend all the preſents he has made me.—But this is run into length, and my heart is ſo full, that if I was to humour it, I ſhould never have done, ſo at once, my ever dear Eliza, accept of the affectionate ſalutation of your poor

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XX.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

Dear Eliza,

I SEND you incloſed a copy of what I have written to Mr. Rowe.

SIR,

To ſay *only* that the contents of your letter affected me, is not doing juſtice to my feelings; for, indeed, I am truly diſtreſſed, and the ſtroke is the heavier as it was unexpected; for I never had any *jealous fears*.—I thank you, Sir, very ſincerely, for your friendly offers, which I ſhall ſo far accept of, as to deſire you would

would deliver a little box to Mr. Brightley, (which I will ſend by the ſtage directed to you) containing things he gave me, and with them words of ſo ſweet breath compoſed, as made the gifts more rich; that perfume loſt, let him take theſe again;

—For to the noble mind,
Rich gifts more poor, when givers prove unkind.

I am not unwilling to believe Mr. Brightley incapable of the ſordid action you take ſuch friendly pains to exculpate. O, Mr. Rowe! that I had never known your friend——But no more.

I am, with great eſteem,

SIR,

Your humble ſervant,

M. BARLOWE.

Can't

Can't you ſpare half an hour, my dear Eliza, to comfort your poor friend; I think I am almoſt reduced to the very loweſt pitch of wretchedneſs.—I ſuppoſe this Miſs Fanſhaw is a great fortune, and that ſhe loves Brightley I can very well believe. My buſy memory is for ever tormenting me—every object is full of his idea—here he ſtood when he ſaid ſo and ſo—he pointed out the beauties of that proſpect—on that very chair he ſat, and ſwore to be for ever mine.——But rouſe thyſelf, puſillanimous girl, from this dejection; thy father has declared thou art his only ſolace.

Doctor Goodall has, by letter, with my father's liking, tranſacted the ſale of his property very advantageouſly.

Good God, Eliza, here is poor Jack come, and how he execrates Brightley—

he

he is a very Chamont.—Pray, my dear brother, ſaid I, do not terrify me—leave every thing to the wiſe diſpoſal of Providence—let us rejoice that we are the injured, rather than thoſe that injure. My father charged him not to ſeek Brightley.—He goes to town again directly—poor lad, what ſobs of grief, or rather paſſion, eſcaped him.

Methinks, Eliza, I wiſh I had encouraged a correſpondence with Mr. Rowe, I ſhould be glad to hear how Brightley goes on; and I wiſh I could, unſeen myſelf, ſee this Miſs Fanſhaw.—Poor Jack has bid us a ſorrowful adieu.

Mr. Freeland, my father's old friend, has written him a long kind letter; he offers him the loan of a large ſum.—He ſends a preſſing invitation to me, in which his daughters join, to ſpend ſome

time there, till my papa has ſettled his affairs—but he declines the money, and I decline the viſit, though we have a grateful ſenſe of Mr. Freeland's kindneſs. I will not leave my father now, Eliza, however.—Mr. Freeland gives me not the leaſt hint about my affair, which is very delicate, for he muſt have heard of it;—and, perhaps, he thought change of place would be ſalutary in my caſe.—Good man, I am obliged to him;—but I could not bear the curioſity of thoſe young women his daughters, or their pity.—Your company would be a cordial indeed, but that I muſt not taſte.—I have written ſix or ſeven long letters to my falſe love—which I have torn as ſoon as finiſhed;—in one I have expreſſed myſelf in the moſt abject terms, and have beſought his pity—then, deſpiſing ſuch ſervility, I have aſſumed a temporary dignity, and have reproached with cool con-

contempt——then his idea has ruſhed acroſs my fancy with theſe perſuaſive looks that captivated my ſimple heart, and I have given way to expreſſions of melting tenderneſs.—Oh, love! what monſterous tricks doſt thou play with thy votaries.

Adieu, my dear Eliza, pity and pray for your diſconſolate

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER XXI.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

OH, my ſweet friend! I am greatly diſtreſſed for you.—The change of your father's circumſtances, I am convinced, you would have borne with true magnanimity; but at this juncture, to be expoſed to the poignant pangs of diſappointed love—Indeed, my dear Maria, my heart bleeds for you—while your wounds are ſo freſh, little is to be ſaid; but time will have its uſual effects—perhaps thoſe very circumſtances which now aggravate your diſtreſſes, may prove the very means of mitigating them; for

you

you can but reflect on Brightley's forſaking you, juſt as it is known you have no fortune, with ſome degree of contempt, though his inconſtancy is aſſerted by his friends, to another motive:—and when, my dear girl, you can bring yourſelf to think meanly of him, your cure will ſoon follow; I proteſt, were it my caſe, I would ſee the villain, and upbraid him in the moſt contemptuous terms—but take notice, I do not preſcribe this to you; your gentle ſpirits would not ſupport ſuch an interview—but I ſhould be able to gall him.—The wretch who could wantonly throw away ſuch a prize as your guileleſs heart, deſerves pity as well as contempt.—I am glad you did not encourage a correſpondence with his friend;—if poſſible, forbear all enquiries about him;—this, I know, has the appearance of a great

difficulty,—and I ſhall uſe no further applications till your wounds are healed.—Your letter conveyed the firſt tidings of your father's wreck; but now, my dear, it is a general topick.—It is very kind of Mr. Freeland to offer you an aſylum; but your reaſons for not accepting it are very cogent. O that it were in my power to offer you a reſidence with us; I flatter myſelf that your true friend's conſolation at this time would be medicinal and pleaſant to you.—— We ſet out to-morrow for Monmouth; a little village near that town being fixed on for the place of our abode.—I pleaſe myſelf with the hopes of being ſettled in a way that I like, for it is deſcribed as a ſweet rural cot—my mother, myſelf, and old Sarah, who chuſes to go with us, will be the whole of the family—and, perhaps, my dear Maria Barlowe may,

in the next ſummer, with a mind free from the galling fetters ſhe now wears, and ſweetly reſigned to an humble ſtation, come and adorn our homely board.

Mr. Fiſher and Jenny were married laſt Tueſday—ſhe parts with her poor old mother and your Eliza very decently.—You know *my ſiſter*—but, however, I hope ſhe and the good man will be very happy—we ſhould conſider ſhe is in her honey moon, and make allowances.—What ſtrange wretches are Mrs. Brightley and her daughter—but I won't rail—we muſt take human nature as it is.

Adverſity, my dear Maria, is an excellent ſchool, though a rugged one——I truſt you will bear the diſcipline nobly——I ſhall conſtantly petition the Almighty to ſuſtain, guide, and direct

you—in whatever ſituation your are in, know me for

Your affectionate

And unalterable friend,

E. HARWOOD.

P. S. Here is an interval of ſome weeks.

LET-

LETTER XXII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

TIME, you ſay, my dear Eliza, will have the uſual effect; I begin to hope that it will; for I am become more calm, and keep myſelf conſtantly employed either at the needle or in houſehold matters—which anſwers very ſalutary ends, in diverting my attention from one corroding ſubject; and, by enuring myſelf to buſineſs, we do not ſo much feel the want of thoſe ſervants we *muſt* do without—our only domeſtick being a little girl who juſt ſerves to do the worſt drudgery——Here's a change, Eliza—but that ſituation muſt be wretch-

ed indeed in which there is not abundant room for thankfulneſs—we have yet food and raiment, and how many thouſand thouſands would eſteem mine a life of luxury, health and innocence, are beyond eſtimation, and they are mine.—My father is, or ſeems to be, reconciled to his preſent way of life ; his good lady only grumbles a little more than ſhe was wont to do in better days.—Don't you think, my dear Eliza, I am in a fair way of enjoying a viſit to you next ſummer.—

Thus far, and not a word of Brightley—but now indulge me a little, and let me ſay, I would give the world to be able to ſtand one interview, and ſay to him, Brightley, I forgive you, be juſt to your firſt vows.—My ſoul (to borrow from Clariſſa) is above thee, man—but alas, my dear, I could not—

I want

I want ſtrength of mind ſo much, that I confeſs if I was to hear he was married, it would be almoſt fatal—and yet he can never be mine.

His mother and ſiſter are gone to make ſome ſtay in London. Miſs aſked me to correſpond, when ſhe took a civil leave;—but I declined, and believe ſhe did not much deſire it—ſhe is not fond of the pen, nor does ſhe bear any reſemblance to Eliza.—Is it not ſurpriſing that change of circumſtances ſhould have made any change in my underſtanding? but people ſeem to think ſo; for in the few viſits which I make, if I offer my humble opinion upon any ſubject that occurs, it is overborn or not attended to; nobody behaves as they uſed to do but Doctor Goodall; and he, if any thing, is more polite; often ſaying, what do you think, Miſs Barlowe, let us have your judgment.

I have half a mind, ſo great is my curioſity about Miſs Fanſhaw, to write to her, you know I could find a ſubject, and good manners would oblige her to anſwer me, and I would like to ſee her letters—but what would that avail?—Brightley loves her, and ſhe is rich, and handſome no doubt.—Oh dear, would I were as I have been in times paſt.

I hope my dear Eliza's rural cot anſwers her expectation in every reſpect;—that your good mother may enjoy ſuch a meaſure of good health as may make her evening *tolerable*, and that every thing may contribute to your felicity, is the ſincere wiſh of

Your affectionate,

And grateful,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XXIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I HAVE a letter from Mr. Rowe, my dear Eliza, methinks I wiſh I had not; and yet, contradictory creature, I wanted to hear from that quarter—but here is his letter:

My dear Eliza, I ſhould have done myſelf the honour of writing before this, but for a multiplicity of buſineſs. As ſoon as I received your commands, I requeſted, by note, half an hour's talk with Mr. Brightley—I put the little box into his hands.——What, is it for me?

whence does it come? I told him from a moſt amiable young lady—his countenance immediately fell. What, Miſs Barlowe I ſuppoſe has returned the trinkets I gave her——what does ſhe ſay? You laid me under no injunctions to conceal your letter, Madam, and I ſhow'd it him. Sweet girl—ſhe is not unwilling to believe me incapable of deſerting her for want of money. No; upon my ſoul that ſhould never have made any difference.—I ſaid Miſs Barlowe had more generoſity than he would find among people in general, who would be apt to put a different conſtruction on his conduct at this juncture, as ſhe obſerves it will admit of very little extenuation—ſet that aſide, you ſee ſhe wiſhes ſhe had never known you, which conveys the idea of diſconſolate diſtreſs.——Excuſe me, Madam, I would not hurt your delicacy—but I own I love to probe him.—

I am

I am ready, he anſwered, to acknowledge myſelf a ſad dog; but tho' I have erred from the right path, am deſirous of acting as well as I now can—Nancy may juſtly plead priority of claim; but I can't pay my devoirs with that fervency which ſhe requires, or I could have done, if I had never ſeen this charming country girl.——I told him young Mr. Barlowe would certainly call him to ſome account about his ſiſter——(and this, my dear young lady, I was authoriſed to ſay from ſome expreſſions your brother dropped when I was lately in his company) O, Brightley replied, let me alone to manage the young man; I hope you don't imagine I am to be ſcar'd by a boy.—But about the things, why did not ſhe keep them? ſhe has an undoubted right to them, if they were of ten times the value——I won't take them. I ſaid I would not affront you by ſending them

back.—I aſk'd him of Miſs Fanſhaw—Why, ſays he, the old man her father treats me with great civility, and I have now free ingreſs and egreſs to the houſe—but I never ſaid any thing to him – he is plaguy warm—but there is no compariſon in the girls.—Miſs Fanſhaw is very well, and there are not many like the other; but I can't think of marrying yet, Rowe, ſaid he with a ſigh.——— I have been thus particular, as thinking it would be agreeable to you, Madam, to know a little of Mr. Brightley's motions—I can't help thinking my friend has an almoſt equal regard to you two ladies, if that be poſſible; and if it were not for this entanglement, I am convinc'd your ſuperior merit would wholly attract him, notwithſtanding the large ſum that will be thrown into the other ſcale—but, to one of your delicacy, I know this is an abſurd way of talking, and half

an heart would be an offer unworthy of you——But dear Miſs Barlowe, there is another man that can devote an whole one to you—but forgive me—ſuch is my veneration for you, that fear of offending tears me from a ſubject that you will perhaps think unſeaſonable, if not impertinent. Be not alarmed about your brother——I will do all in my power to prevent miſchief.——I wait your commands concerning the watch, jewels, &c. and am,

Madam,

Your profound admirer,

and very humble ſervant,

E. ROWE.

And ſo Mr. Rowe thinks, my dear Eliza, that Brightley loves us *equally*, and yet me *the beſt*.—How can that be? No, no, I dare ſay we ſhould ſoon ſee which

ſcale

ſcale would be the heavieſt—poor Maria would kick the beam—I wiſh, as I ſaid before, not to have had this letter—it has ſtirred things which were a little upon the ſtagnation.--Indeed, I could not thank him for his divided affections.—Alas, how fondly did I prate of the happineſs of being a wife!——But now, my dear, I can ſay with you, that I will never have another name:—I have given myſelf up wholly to this firſt paſſion, and can never change its object; it would be affectation to pretend not to underſtand Mr. Rowe, though I ſhall take no notice in the letter I ſhall ſend him (about the things) that I do. My father has not aſked me to ſee Mr. Rowe's letter, which I am glad of; for perhaps he, good man, might think it poſſible for me to receive his addreſſes, and I ſhould have his importunities to contend with. The only point I have in view now, my

dear

dear Eliza, is a *tolerably* contented ſpirit—but O how hard to forget.—If you hear ſeldomer from me, you may conclude that I have given over ſcribbling for more uſeful employments, and am conforming myſelf apace to the buſineſs of common life.—Happy ſhall I be if ſuch a meaſure of enjoyment falls to my lot as common people uſually have, who eat and drink, labour and reſt, and ſo go on year after year, without any extraordinary viciſſitudes——but I have not yet given over writing—and you will ſoon have another from

Your moſt affectionate

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My dear Eliza,

YOU ſay in your laſt, that the ruin of our houſe (what a pompous phraſe) was a common topick of converſation; with all my heart, my dear;—but you are now ſo far off, that it will be there a matter wholly unknown; when I go down to ſee you next ſummer, as I hope to do in the frame of mind you wiſh me—and ſpruce, but plain cloaths, none of your honeſt neighbours will ſuſpect me to have ever been a fine Miſs, within an ace of ſtepping into my own coach, and that the pink and ſilver was all ready,—

dy,—or that ſo young a maid has been croſſed in love.—You may perceive, Eliza, that I am better than I have been.

I wrote a day or two ago to Mr. Rowe, as follows:

SIR,

If Mr. Brightley poſitively refuſes to take his things, I ſhould be much obliged to you to ſend them to his ſiſter, who is now in town, and pleaſe to let her know it is by my expreſs deſire that you ſend them to her;—for be aſſured, Sir, I never will receive them again--did he think I would.—You hurt me not, Mr. Rowe, in taking notice to him that my letter conveyed the idea of diſconſolate diſtreſs;—I have, to be ſure, been much diſtreſſed—I am not aſhamed to own it.—For heaven's ſake, Sir, endeavour to pacify my dear brother, if he ever mentions the

affair

affair to you—I think your friend may ſit down quietly without farther hurting the poor Maria in the perſon of her beloved brother.—So—Miſs Fanſhaw will have a vaſt fortune—Ah, Mr. Rowe, I have been weighed in the balance, and am found wanting—Excuſe the trouble you have had in this affair from,

SIR,

Your obliged

humble ſervant,

MARIA BARLOWE.

The very next poſt, Eliza, brought this:

Dear Miſs Barlowe,

The contents of your favour of this morning ſhall be duly obſerved—I will once more

more tender the things to Mr. Brightley—his attendance at Mr. Fanſhaw's, I believe, is now pretty conſtant. I hinted at ſomething in my laſt, which though you do not condeſcend to take the leaſt notice of, yet your ſilence leaves me room to put the beſt conjectures on it, and you will not, I truſt, my excellent young lady, be mortally offended if I preſume to be more explicit, and humbly beg permiſſion to pay my devoirs to you; I never yet ſaw the lady whoſe mind and perſon were in any degree comparable to you—I could not behold ſuch perfection unmoved——but as there ſeemed to be a mutual inclination between my friend and you, it became me to endeavour to ſtifle the beginning flame—he has proved unworthy of you; and give me leave to hope, Madam, that a mind, ſuſceptible as yours to all the tender feelings, may be

brought

brought to think favourably of a man who would prefer you without a dower to a princeſs—I have an eaſy fortune in my own right, and no relations near enough to give them a power of controuling me— ſuffer me, deareſt Madam, to wait on you; till which happy time, allow me to ſtile myſelf

Your ſincere admirer,

and devoted humble ſervant,

E. ROWE.

So you ſee, Eliza, I have drawn myſelf into a ſcrape; this is the effect of forbearing to be frank. I was affectedly ſilent—but I will have done with Mr. Rowe at once—his diſintereſted offer deſerves an ingenuous reply.—Lord bleſs

theſe

theſe men, do they think we can change our lovers with the ſame indifference we do our garments——I really believe this Mr. Rowe is a very good ſort of a young man, but he would not have been my choice if I had never ſeen Brightley.—Heaven knows what may be my lot, or how, in caſe of my father's death, I ſhould get food and raiment; (but Heaven avert that ſtroke, he is yet little more than of the middle age) but ſhall I, to procure thoſe, proſtitute my perſon (for what is marriage without affection but a legal proſtitution). No, no.—Here is my anſwer:

SIR,

Your generous offer demands my gratitude; I will be very ingenuous with you, as frankneſs is the only return I can

can make for your diſintereſtedneſs.—indeed, Mr. Rowe, I have inſurmountable objections to your ſuit, and can never ſee you in any light but that of friend——Mr. Brightley's image is in truth graven on the tablet of my heart; length of time may, a little, take out the impreſſion, but I queſtion if it is ever totally effaced—I own I underſtood your hint in the former letter, and being ſilent about it, was a little piece of affectation which I now contemn—I beg you will write no more in this way, for I would not give my hand to an emperor unleſs my affections could go with it. No, Sir, endeavour to find out ſome happier virgin, and kindle the firſt ſparks of virtuous love in her boſom, and think no more of me. Whilſt I have life I ſhall retain a grateful ſenſe of your behaviour; excuſe brevity, for if I was to

fill

fill a quire of paper, the wole amount would be this, that I can never be any thing but,

SIR,

Your obliged humble ſervant,

MARIA BARLOWE.

P. S. Don't think me capable of returning rudeneſs for civility, but I muſt be ſilent if you write any more on that ſubject.

I have given Mr. Rowe a civil diſmiſſion, han't I my dear Eliza—if he teizes me again, he will leſſen himſelf in my opinion; for what man of ſpirit would think of a girl that owns ſhe likes another. I don't, you ſee, let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on my cheek—but I will try to ſit like patience. I have tremours in looking over a newspaper,

paper, leſt Mr. Brightley's marriage with Miſs Fanſhaw, a lady of great beauty, merit, and a fortune of——I don't know how much, ſhould pop in my view.—

Scarce any body viſits us but Doctor Goodall—he lends me a litle horſe, and in fine evenings we ride about—O he is an excellent man! He has whiſpered that he is in hopes of procuring a place for my papa, a genteel employment, for which he is ſure he is qualified, that will at leaſt be worth a hundred and fifty pounds a year; this he thinks to bring about through the influence of the great man who much reveres the Doctor.—But he won't tell my father till he is certain, that he may not ſuffer the pain of a diſappointment. I think I may reſt aſſured that Eliza will not blame her Maria for ſo peremptorily denying Mr. Rowe, it is ſo conformable to her own ſentiments;

ments; who, having ſuffered by one unworthy wretch, reſolves to truſt no more of them.—To be ſure I am a very young creature, but I have travelled far in the land of love, and meaſuring back my ſteps will take up ſome time.—If my dear father is ſo fortunate as to get this place, we ſhall be rich enough; I will perſuade him not to increaſe his expences, and perhaps in ſome few years he may have ſaved a little portion for his girl, juſt enough to enable her to move "Along the cool ſequeſtered vale of life" with you.

But this, you will ſay, is reckoning your chickens before they are hatched; very true, Eliza—but while I keep from the ridiculous flights of the Glaſſman, whoſe intolerable vanity cauſed him to ſpurn his imaginary conſort, and ſo with one kick demoliſh the brittle foundation

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of his future greatneſs; I think there can be no harm in raiſing ſuch a ſimple ſtructure in idea, for it can hardly be called caſtle-building.

A perſon dropped in this evening, whom my father was formerly very intimate with; the man has lately imbibed ſtrange notions, and is what they call a Free-thinker; he ſeems to have very ſtrong natural powers, for I ſuppoſe he has had no education; he ſaid ſome things that really frightened me, and others which pleaſed me exceſſively; one was, that the greateſt ſin we were all commonly guilty of was *diſcontent*; it is added, he faucily ſaying, to the Almighty, *you* have not done well by me. And, indeed, my dear Eliza, if we conſider that diſcontent, beſides its audacity, introduces Envy, that moſt baleful of all vices, we ſhall chace it from us.—But

why

why write I thus to you, who with a placid ſerenity of mind, and a temper ſweetened and exalted with grateful piety, convince us that you know not what it is.

I fear my dear brother drives but an indifferent trade, his maſter has lately wrote to my papa—he ſeemed vexed, and ſent a very long letter to his ſon laſt night—God grant it may have an happy influence—but I have ſcribbled a great deal, ſo at once, will ſay, that I am,

My dear Eliza,

moſt affectionately yours,

M. BARLOWE.

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My dear Eliza,

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M. BARLOWE.

LETTER XXV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

WELL, my dear, thank heaven I am once more reſtored to a ſtate of tranquillity, and ſo well as to be able to wiſh that Brightley was married. Mr. Rowe anſwers the good opinion I entertained of his ſpirit, ſo far as not to trouble me again—what is done with the preſents I neither know or care.—The dear worthy Doctor Goodall aſſures me he is almoſt certain of the place, but ſtill forbears to tell my father; for if any thing unexpected ſhould intervene it would then be an inſupportable mortification—

to be ſure he judges right. I think, Eliza, my father, by his affliction, is now better fitted to enjoy this decent competence (ſhould Providence ſee fit to allot it him): his temper is a good deal amended; and that haughtineſs, which with regret I have often mentioned, is much ſubdued—the many hours he has lately ſpent with this excellent divine has I believe been of the higheſt advantage. I wiſh you, my dear, was acquainted with the Doctor, he would command your love and reverence.——I am once more awake, Eliza, to the beauties of nature, the fields and gardens again look charming, my eyes are no longer jaundiced, the lovely flowers ſtand confeſſed in their genuine radiance.——I have a large family of poultry, that eye me with much complacency, and many innocent enjoyments.—Happineſs, I am convinced, is more equally diſtributed than many peo-

ple will allow. God is equal, juſt and kind to all his offspring—when I am enumerating my enjoyments, I ought not to omit the never failing ſource of pleaſure to me, viz. that of reading.—I have lately met with a little thing which has afforded me much amuſement—Have you ſeen the Vicar of Wakefield? if you have not, you will meet with ſome inimitable ſtrokes of humour, and ſome very affecting ſcenes, which I am ſure you will be pleaſed with—the good man cautions his family after their fall, to beware of *aſpiring beggary*—this ſeems to be a hint peculiarly adapted to my fallen ſtate, and I hope to profit by it.

There is ſome talk of Mrs. Brightley's return home, I wiſh ſhe had left this neighbourhood——But why?—I muſt learn to bear the ſuperciliouſneſs which often attends on wealth, and the "proud man's

man's contumely."—But were my dear father ſure of this place, we ſhould certainly be a chearful family; our paſt adverſities would endear our preſent bleſſings.——I have written a long letter to my brother, which coſt me ſome pains; I beſeech him to endeavour to eſtabliſh a character of ſobriety and induſtry; and prove, as well as I can, that it is in his power to attain wealth and reputation, and be hereafter ſerviceable to his poor ſiſter, only by walking in the road of virtue——Jack always thought well of my underſtanding, and you know he loves me dearly.—Good bye, my dear Eliza; ſalute your mother in my name, and remember in your devotions

Your affectionate

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER XXVI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

SOME time has elapſed ſince I have wrote to my ever dear Eliza——this has not proceeded from want of thinking of her, for not a day has paſſed in which you have not been much in my thoughts; but a kind of agreeable ſameneſs has taken place (thank God) of our late turbulent ſcenes—and I had nothing to tell you, except I filled a letter with on ſuch a day my white hen brought out eleven chickens——or on Monday we waſhed a great waſh, and it was ſuch weather we were

were obliged to dry all by the fire, and the like important matters.——Such ſort of chit-chat, Eliza, is genetally uſed by *notable* women, which character I have known acquired by thoſe means, and another perhaps equally induſtrious has not been eſteemed ſo becauſe ſhe has not prated ſo much.—You will wonder what I drive at—why I muſt, if poſſibe, get the name of a good houſewife, and the *ſubſtance* will not do without the *ſhadow*. Fielding I think, ſays, Some good ladies take infinite pains to keep the ſhadow of virtue, and think the real thing of little value.—But I deteſt every ſpecies of impoſition; it is my duty to employ myſelf agreeably to my preſent ſituation and future proſpects; but whatever I do amongſt ſouls leſs capacious, there is no occaſion to put on airs of houſewifely importance when I write to my exalted friend.

I hear Mr. Rowe makes his addreſſes to a very amiable young woman, whoſe name is Brooks, and meets with encouragement.—Good young man, I wiſh him very happy.

Jack has wrote an anſwer to my long epiſtle, but he ſeems not at all ſanguine with regard to his future views,—He tells me, I know very little of the world, wiſhes it may be in his power to be of ſervice to me, it will always be in his inclination, and the like.

Rejoice with me, my deareſt friend, our worthy Doctor has juſt been to inform my father that through the great man's means he has procured a place for him, he is to enter into the buſineſs and profits of it very ſoon:—he muſt employ a perſon under him, which may be procured at ſixty pounds a year, the

thing itſelf is better than two hundred.—My father was in the utmoſt ſurprize at this unexpected piece of intelligence; joy and gratitude deprived him of utterance——I ſnatched our benefactor's hand and kiſſed it; he withdrew it with affected gravity, and ſaid, the young girls of the preſent day are ſo forward that we *young* fellows have much ado to withſtand their arts—he is an old man, by the way, Eliza. My papa at length expreſſed his ſenſe of the Doctor's goodneſs in terms that delighted the worthy man, for there was an innate piety viſible in his ſentiments, as though he thanked the Doctor as the ſecond cauſe of this fortunate event; in ſhort, ſpoke like a grateful man, and a religious one.—My good mother ſimpered, and curtſied——ſhe is a woman of very mean intellects, my dear, but that ſhe

can't help you'll ſay; but ſhe is mean in every thing.

Well, now we ſhall be rich enough—two hundred pounds a year (for what remained of the wreck will pay my father's deputy) will be more to us than four would have been ſome time ago.—If I had been married at the time I expected, without having ſipped of the bitter cup of affliction, I queſtion if I ſhould have been more ſolidly happy than at this preſent writing.——My pleaſures might have been more intenſe, indeed, in ſome reſpects—a ſort of tumultous joy—but now I feel a ſerene kind of comfort without any flutteration.

We have been laying it all out, my dear, and have concluded to keep very little company, and not to increaſe the number of our domeſticks; ſo a little portion,

portion, to marry Maria honourably as she is born, as old Acasto has it, will be the point my dear father will have in view. But no matrimony, say I—and yet I am in love too—but it is with one who will certainly reject me—you guess I mean this dear old divine—I wish not to mix with the gay world—a country retirement and the middle station bounds my wishes.—But adieu, for this time, my dear Eliza; I know your friendly heart will participate with

Your grateful

And affectionate

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

REJOICE with you, my dear Maria? I do indeed moſt heartily rejoice with you in this pleaſing event, and could not forbear telling you immediatly that I did.—The ſtorms that aroſe to blacken your proſpects ſeem to be happily overblown—and the landſcape looks the brighter I dare ſay—and now moiſt, bright, and green, it laughs around—as our favourite Thomſon has it.—Pray, my good girl, contrive to pay me a viſit as ſoon as poſſible ou w l be charm'd with our habitation, and our neighbours, ſimple ſouls, of manners pure and natural;

tural; not that I would intimate that human nature is not every where pretty much the ſame—but here is more variety of characters. Good breeding, as you obſerve, gives an inſipid ſameneſs to the faſhionable world;—theſe uncultivated creatures, by acting naturally, are more pleaſing, and one is often agreeably diſappointed in meeting with good ſenſe and true humour where one leaſt expected it.—The ruſticks are often much better than they look to be;—among folks more polite, we are frequently apt to form conjectures very favourable to their underſtanding, from the manner of their firſt addreſs—but they never improve upon you—and we are chagrined by finding only that ſuperficial ſmartneſs, eaſily acquired by mixing with genteel company.—But alas, my dear, vice is not confined to cities—we have perjured ſwains, and forſaken dam-

damſels;—envy ſhews its ugly face amidſt cottages, and a new ſtraw hat will as effectually conjure up that fiend as a diamond ſolitaire.

I endeavour to do what little good I can by compoſing differences, and aim at a character oppoſite from that of Kate Willow; who, as Sir Roger deſcribes her, having been a beauty herſelf, had a malignant pleaſure in ſetting young lovers at variance.—Your dear old parſon, I am half in love with him myſelf.—I can but ſmile at you, Maria, when you ſo ſeriouſly declare againſt marriage;—ſtay another year or two, my dear, before you poſitively determine—if your troubles are all over, as I pray heaven they may, what a ſhort diſcipline you will have had, though indeed it has been ſevere.

I have

I have had a friendly letter from Mr. Fiſher—it ſeems my ſiſter is not well—the man really appears to be a good ſort of man——he expreſſes himſelf very tenderly about my mother's increaſing infirmities, and ve advanced age——and adds, that if Providence ſmiles on his undertakings, he ſhall think it his duty to contribute to her eaſe.—But I build nothing on this, for I expect Jenny to have a family of her own, and I know her heart is not very apt to expand.

The moſt pleaſing thoughts I at preſent entertain, are in the proſpect of my ſweet young friend's felicity, which now there is a probability of being eſtabliſhed.—But bear in mind, my dear, the mutability of all ſublunary things;—how needleſs this cautious thought

thought to your apprehenſive heart.—
Good bye, my amiable and beloved girl—
My mother joins in every good wiſh,
with

Your affectionate

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

LORD have mercy upon us, my dear Eliza—a ſtrange beginning you'll ſay, but my poor father is taken ſick; he was ſeized with a cold ſhivering laſt night, the ſure prelude of a fever, and to-day he is very feveriſh.—His wife, my mother I ſhould ſay, looks upon his illneſs as very ſlight, but I am moſt dreadfully alarmed—but a truce with my fears, if poſſible, till this night is over—it is over, my dear, but the morning brings no comfort to me—his diſtemper is greatly increaſed—the apothecary, an old experienced man, ſhakes his

thought to your apprehensive heart.—
Good bye, my amiable and beloved girl—
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Your affectionate

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L E T.

LETTER XXVIII.

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his head, and terrifies me beyond expreſſion.——Doctor Martyn is expected every moment.

O! my dear, what a day have I had, (for you will obſerve this is evening) my dear parent ſeems ſenſible of his danger, and his whole anxiety is about your poor Maria.——Gracious heaven avert, if it be thy bleſſed will, this dreadful ſtroke—how ſhall I ſurvive the loſs of my tender, my only parent?

Doctor Martyn is arrived—I will hear what he ſays, and before I go to my painful pillow tell my dear Eliza what that is.—A gleam of hope enables me to go on a little better—Doctor Martyn thinks his fever very high, but builds much on the goodneſs of his conſtitution; he has ordered him three bliſters.—I hardly ever leave the chamber, and cannot hide

my

my tears from the notice of my poor father;—he ſays little to comfort me, and I believe thinks himſelf that he ſhall die—but this one night, however, I will encourage hope—he has never been accuſtomed to illneſs, and his ſpirits may be depreſſed. The ever to be revered Dr. Goodall has prevailed with the phyſician to accept of an apartment in his houſe—otherwiſe he would have returned home, as he lives but ſix miles off, and I ſhall be the eaſier, knowing he is ſo near. But, my dear Eliza, is not this laying too much ſtreſs on ſecond cauſes.—O! no; I am convinced in God's hands are the iſſues of life and death—but he made phyſicians, and we muſt uſe the means. I will endeavour to ſleep with ſome degree of becoming reliance on his goodneſs.—So adieu, my dear, for a few hours, but I ſhall not cloſe here.

O, my

O, my Eliza, what a ſoul-moving object have your poor Maria's eyes opened upon this morning dawn—my father, my dear father, delirious and raving.—I awoke, and ſtepping out of bed to enquire of the people that watched him, found him in this dreadful way.—With a wild impatience I diſpatched a meſſenger for the Doctor—but O I fear, I fear it is all over, he owned he was much worſe, and ordered four bliſters more.—I muſt ſend for my brother—he raves inceſſantly about his children, but knows not even me a moment together.—A little ſlumber into which my father is fallen has again revived the faint glimmering of hope, which barely exiſts in the boſom of your afflicted friend.——I have been all day writing the above by bits and ſcraps.—Doctor Martyn was ſent for, and will return as ſoon as poſſible.—My mother-in-law, poor woman,

is

is now truly afflicted.—I will not go to bed to night however.—Doctor Goodall ſent for me down for half an hour, to give me ſuch conſolations as only benevolence, heightened by religion, could give.

'Tis now midnight, my dear Eliza, and I am environed with horrors.—My father has had but one ſhort interval of ſenſe, and that only ſerved to pang me to my very ſoul.—On the nurſe's intreating him to take a medicine—pray, Sir, ſays ſhe, do—here is Miſs Barlowe intreats you to take it—he fixed his eyes moſt ruefully upon me, and ſaid, O my dear.—There was ſomething ſo dreadfully ſignificant in his manner of ſpeaking, that I want words to deſcribe—but if I live a thouſand years I ſhall remember it—the ominous ſcreams and flaps of

of the window—but that you will ſay is nothing.

I have ſent for my brother, poor lad, he loved his father, though they ſometimes diſagreed.

Good God! the meſſenger that went for Jack is returned with a ſhort note from Mr. Clayton, who was juſt about to ſend here to enquire after him, he having deſerted his houſe and buſineſs for three days.—He ſays nothing ſevere, I ſuppoſe in compaſſion to our preſent diſtreſs.—What in the world is become of my unhappy brother—but I have a larger ſorrow, that at preſent I feel not all the weight of this.

Oh, my dear Eliza! pray for your Maria, my father is dying—I wind up this diſmal

mal epiſtle with ſaying I am the moſt forlorn and diſtreſſed of human beings—God have mercy on your poor

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER XXIX.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

AFTER ten days of almoſt inſenſibility, I again take up my woeful tale—my dear parent expired very ſoon after I cloſed the laſt letter to my Eliza—Altho' it was an event we every moment expected, yet at the time I was ſo overwhelmed as to loſe for an hour or two even a ſenſe of my afflictions.—Oh, my dear! is it not ſtrange that the ſoul is capable ſometimes of conjuring up a kind of woeful enjoyment, even from the very depths of ſorrow. For ſeveral days I fed my rapacious grief with

with ſitting by the coffin that held the remains of my venerable parent——Do not you blame me when you ſee how luxurious I have been?—My reaſon begins to ſuggeſt that I muſt not ſo indulge myſelf.--Two nights ſince he was depoſited in the ſilent grave, to which I followed him, and now my ſituation ſtands revealed in the moſt dreary point of view. Whilſt my father was balancing between life and death, it wholly engroſſed me; and ſpare his life, ſpare his life, was the vehement and conſtant language of my ſoul—but heaven ſaw fit it ſhould be otherwiſe, and I know not where to ſhelter, how to get bread to eat, or raiment to put on.——Alas, my prophetic friend! you bid me, in your laſt, bear in mind the mutability of ſublunary things. No news yet of my brother—ſure I am the child of ſorrow—Will you not allow that ſuch complicated diſtreſſes are

enough to ſink me to diſſolution?—Were it not for the unprecedented humanity of Doctor Goodall, my ſoul would ere this have taken her flight to a leſs tempeſtuous climate——I am at preſent at his houſe. After he had buried my papa, he inſiſted on taking me home with him, and I can but acknowledge it has been an aleviation——for every apartment in that houſe is full of my deareſt father—but at the repetition of that name my eyes ſtream a-freſh—ſo that I cannot yet go on. Well, my dear, ſleep unexpectedly viſited me ſoon after I had written the laſt line, ſo I am enabled this morning to purſue my diſmal ſtory—My kind hoſt went early (before I was up) to my mother-in-law—ſhe was enough compoſed to talk with him. With his concurrence ſhe propoſes to ſell the remaining effects, which will be barely ſufficient to pay little debts lately contracted with funeral

expences.--So, my dear Eliza, your poor Maria has all the world before her—but a letter for me—it was from Mr. Clayton—the Doctor was ſo good, ſeeing my diſtreſs on Jack's account, yeſterday unknown to me, to ſend a diſcreet man to enquire for my wretched brother.—O, my Eliza, when will the meaſure of my griefs be full—I have not been able to hold a pen for a day or two, but now will piece the thread.—Mr. Clayton's letter almoſt diſtracted me——my brother is certainly gone abroad, and I ſhall never ſee him again.—His maſter, with great tenderneſs to me, touched on his late conduct, but is reſolutely determined never to receive him into his family again.—O, my dear, had this youth (whom I love as my own ſoul) been wiſe and virtuous I ſhould have eſpied ſome kind of hope.——The man found out ſome of his moſt intimate

friends, who poſitively aſſured him he was gone aboard an Indiaman—O thou all wiſe, all gracious God! have mercy on the poor wanderer whereſoever he be—ſhield him from ſickneſs, and let him have power and grace to procure honeſt bread, if it be thy bleſſed will.—People in general make light of this my loſs—but my dear, they have not a ſiſter's feelings—even the worthy Doctor ſpeaks too unfeelingly about it—but he is a friend to virtue, and this dear youth has flagrant vices; juſtice compels me to ſay that.—My mother-in-law, I ſhould have told you, deſigns to retire to —where ſhe lived with her firſt huſband—ſhe has regulated her matters, and is about to undertake the journey; ſhe propoſed my going with her, indeed ſhe could do no leſs—but I have declined that. I know her narrow heart, and the Doctor did not perſuade me to go——

go——he deſires me to ſtay here till my health is a little eſtabliſhed—a few weeks perhaps I may, but it muſt not be long.

Mr. Freeland, my father's old friend, has given me an invitation, to come and reſide as long as I pleaſe (is his friendly expreſſion) with his daughter Patty—the eldeſt having been married ſome time in London—and a perſon who lived ſervant with us about nine years ago (her name was Nanny Turner, I think you muſt recollect her, ſhe was vaſtly fond of me) is extremely well ſettled in one of the villages near town, and has ſent me a moſt preſſing invitation to come to her houſe; the which of theſe I ſhall accept of (if either) I will inform you of in my next.

My whole fortune now, my dear Eliza, excluſive of my wardrobe, which is more ſumptuous than it would have been, had I never known Brightley, conſiſts of five

guineas——Good Heaven! What ſhall I do? Ever ſince I have been capable of diſtinguiſhing, I have been laying up ſuch ideas as would have made my pleaſures more exquiſite, and conſequently will render my pains more acute, and ſharpen the arrows of adverſity.—But I have run this letter into length; and ſhall only ſay, ſympathize *with*, and pray for

Your afflicted but affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

HOW has my heart bled, and how does it ſtill bleed in every vein, my dear Maria, for your ſevere and manifold afflictions—for heaven's ſake come down to me; for a time, at leaſt, let the cottage of your faithful Eliza be dignified by becoming an aſylum to ſuch diſtreſſed innocence and exalted virtue.—O, my dear, that you could have accepted of the protection of that worthy young man, Mr. Rowe.—But forgive me, I mean not to blame you—your conduct has all along been examplary—bear up ſtill, my ſweet girl, for my ſake.——I

ſhall forbear touching on any of the particulars of your two laſt moving epiſtles, in the hope that you will ſoon give me an opportunity of verbally ſoothing you. God, of his infinite mercy, ſupport, comfort, and guide you, prays

Your ſympathiſing,

And moſt affectionate,

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

MY dear Eliza's letter is balm to my ſtill bleeding wounds; ſo replete it is with ſentiments of true friendſhip and generoſity—your expreſſing yourſelf ſo briefly, and with ſuch energy, convinces me that your friendly heart longs to ſee and comfort your drooping Maria; but my dear, I can't go down to you, as I will tell you by and by—but I am preparing to leave my preſent benefactor—and indeed he ſees the expediency of this meaſure.—The tittle-tattle folk of the neighbourhood begin to think it odd the Doctor ſhould take to me ſo much, as

he is not over and above rich, and has relations of his own not very well provided for.—Sure he muſt be ſtrangely attached to Miſs Barlowe—but they ſuppoſe ſhe is ſo very ſenſible, and converſes, and all that—this is the talk of one ſort of people ;—and others, where this moſt excellent of men viſits, hints, that to be ſure I ſhall try to learn ſome genteel kind of buſineſs, which, at my time of life, may be eaſily acquired—and a lady whom I once thought of being related to, gave it as her opinion, that if I was to go abroad to ſome of our ſettlements, I might, in all probability, get a rich huſband. But alas, Eliza, you who ſo well know the turn and diſpoſition of Maria Barlowe, will eaſily gueſs it is impoſſible for *her* to make that experiment. You wiſh I could have accepted of Mr. Rowe's offer—but a momet's recollection made it obvious to you that

I could

I could not; and O, my dear, to own a truth, all theſe various and complicated evils I have ſuſtained, have not been ſufficient to quite extinguiſh the old flame. I thank you a thouſand times, Eliza, for your earneſt invitation; but I know your circumſtances can ill admit of ſuch an addition to your table; and, to be plain, my finances are ſo very low, that I can't afford to ſpend three or four guineas out of five to convey my wretched ſelf to you.—No, my dear, Mr. Freeland is in affluent circumſtances; and as he had a very great regard for my dear father, and has preſſed me ſo very warmly to come, and as his daughter, he ſays, wants a companion, I think, and ſo does the Doctor, that I had better go thither—and perhaps I may paſs ſome months there, and in the mean time may be gradually deſcending, ſo that I may be in a fitter frame of

mind

mind to go to a milliner, or ſomething of that ſort, for a year or two.

I have written a letter of thanks to Mrs. Walford, (Nanny Turner that was) to let her know I am at preſent engaged—ſometime hence, perhaps, I may wait on her. Is it not ſtrange, my dear Eliza, that Mr. Barlowe, my father's only brother, ſhould be ſo governed by a termagant wife, as to totally diſregard a pathetic application I made to him very ſoon after the death of my dear parent—his, my uncle's, own nature I am ſure is tender. Mrs. Barlowe is gone to ——.

Where is my only, my beloved brother—if I *could* wipe away the tears of uſeleſs ſorrow for the *dead*, yet every day I muſt weep for him.

I had ſome thoughts of turning part of my wardrobe into money—my beſt dreſs

dreſs may procure me envy, and would ſell for ſomething conſiderable—but ſhall defer it at preſent. When cuſtom preſcribes that I ſhould lay by this ſable garb, I ſhall act agreeable to my *then* ſituation and neceſſity. You ſhall hear from me, my deareſt friend, as ſoon as I am arrived at Mr. Freeland's, I will tell you what reception I meet with—no doubt but it will be very different from *that* I received when I accompanied my dear father for a ſhort viſit: but let me try to keep clear from the common fault of thoſe who ſojourn in the vale of misfortune, by thinking I am ſlighted where I am not. Mr. Rowe is married to the young lady I mentioned to you;—may they be very happy—he certainly deſerves to be ſo.

Don't be diſpleaſed, my dear Eliza, that I give a negative to your cordial invitation—

vitation—my heart feels, and is warmed by your friendly love. The utmoſt gratitude, and moſt ſincere affection, is all the return at preſent in the power of your

MARIA BARLOWE.

P. S. Time, my dear, ſpeeds on with equal flights, though the unhappy are apt to think he moves with leaden wings; for the months I have paſſed with the good man have been lengthened to years, notwithſtanding his abundant kindneſs, which I can never hope to repay.

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I have been here a week, my dear Eliza. I wrote pretty ſoon after my laſt to Mr. Freeland, and told him I would thankfully accept of an aſylum in his houſe for ſome time. My friend, my father I might call him, the Doctor, gave me ſix guineas; and what I eſteem, poor as I am, infinitely more than money, a parental bleſſing, accompanied with tears; he ſent his ſervant with me, and we arrived time enough for him to return.

Mr. Freeland was from home, but Miſs received me as well as could be expected,

expected, all things considered. We had but few words past till the old gentleman came in—he welcomed me to his house very affectionately——desired his daughter to use her best endeavours to divert, and make me happy, and forbore any questions that might be painful. Miss and I were bed-fellows; but I won't tire you with a journal of the week elapsed; only, my dear Eliza, just say, that I fear this good man doats on a very unworthy child. Miss Patty Freeland, I very much suspect, has a dreadful failing, a fondness for strong liquor.—She is fretful and peevish in a morning, low spirited, and full of complaints, which, perhaps, wears off before dinner, and she becomes extremely talkative; but sometimes it is later in the day, or near evening, before she grows gay and good humoured. Don't think your friend's misfortunes have given an acidity

to her temper humility and patience; I hope, and believe I have acquired, and there is no acid in thoſe qualities. We ſee but few people—Miſs Freeland certainly drinks privately. Thoſe amuſements, ſo engaging to girls at our time of life, eſpecially when, as in her caſe, they have not ſip'd of the bitter cup of affliction, have no attractions for her. She neither works, reads, or converſes; here is a muſical inſtrument, which ſhe never touches, and I have not yet ventured to hint that I havethe leaſt knowledge of the gamut. Our only attempts towards amuſement, have been a ſhort, but ſauntering walk or two, not far enough to benefit us by exerciſe, or rendered pleaſing by rational talk, or obſerving the beauties of Nature; and even that, on her part, ſeems to be merely an effort, becauſe her father enjoins her to walk for health's ſake. You

will

will ſee at preſent, my dear Eliza, that your Maria is in a ſtate not pitiable, or much to be envied. I eat at a plentiful table; ſleep, when I can, on a down bed, and am not required to labour; but then the days, which will never return, are ſpent without pleaſure or improvement.——Mr. Freeland is a good man, and a ſenſible one, but he enters not into converſation with us, or ſeems to think young women capable of it, any farther than what relates to their own dreſs, amuſements, &c. judging, I ſuppoſe, of other people by his own daughters, for whom, as I ſaid before, he has an extreme fondneſs for—on the ſlighteſt complaint of Miſs he ſeems much alarmed.

But adieu, my dear Eliza, for this time; I have ſcribbled a great deal about people whom, perhaps, I have made a very

a very wrong judgment of; be assured, my nearest and best friend, that I will not give way to discontent, or lose a reputable, though temporary asylum, by too delicate refinements. That health and peace may be your constant guests, prays

Your most affectionate,

M. BARLOWE,

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My dear Eliza,

THREE weeks are elapſed ſince I have thrown out the contents of my troubled heart to you, and in truth I fear that in time your almoſt invincible patience will be overcome by ſuch repetitions of dolour, which I for ever ſend you—but, O forgive theſe few diſtruſtful lines—reply not to them—the radince of your character was for a moment hid from my mind's eye.—Alas, my dear, this has indeed been a temporary aſylum——for I muſt ſoon ſeek out another; my ſuſpicions,

picions, with regard to Miſs Freeland's failing, are moſt amply verified—but you will ſay, why need that affect you, you might conceal without encouraging her fault—very true, my dear, but I will relate the whole circumſtantially. For ſeveral ſucceſſive days after I wrote laſt to you, I obſerved ſhe drank not leſs than five or ſix glaſſes of wine at and after dinner, and on her father's quitting the table before us, as is his cuſtom ſometimes to ſleep, ſhe preſſed me extremely to drink, which I did, one glaſs, but abſolutely refuſed any more, at which ſhe ſeemed p'qued—I made no reply—She went up ſtairs to dreſs as we were to go out--I followed her in a little time; on my entering the room there was a ſtrong ſmell of ſpirituous liquors. Miſs Freeland was before the glaſs, but unable to adjuſt her hair—I offered to aſſiſt her, but in words

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hardly articulate, ſhe ſaid, ſhe would not give me the trouble, then complained of being very ill.——I called the maid, by which time ſhe was fallen back in the chair almoſt inſenſible: the girl, with a ſimper, begged her to lie down on the bed: I retired again into the parlour, and in half an hour went up to her apartment, and found her in a profound ſleep with a colour like ſcarlet: I met the girl on the ſtairs and told her Miſs Freeland was aſleep—ſhe anſwered that would ſet her to rights again, and added that her miſtreſs was often taken ſo——you will ſuppoſe I made no anſwer——When tea time came the old gentleman was ſurpriſed to find me at home and without his daughter—I ſaid we were prevented from going out by Miſs Freeland's being taken ill, he ſeemed frightened, and aſked where ſhe was, I told him on the bed;

bed; he hurried up directly—when I ſuppoſe ſhe was juſt awake. I thought it beſt to follow him; ſhe was ſitting upright in the bed, her maid by her with a ſmelling bottle.—My dear Patſey, ſaid her father, what is the matter? I have been extremely ill, Sir, and have been left alone a great while; Suſan thinking Miſs Barlowe was with me did not come up ſtairs—I ſtepped forward, and aſſured her, ſhe was in a profound ſleep half an hour ſince; on which the maid and ſhe looked on one another as though I had told a falſehood; the old gentleman did not know what to ſay, but taking her hand hoped ſhe was better now—aſked if we ſhould drink tea in her room——ſhe ſaid no, ſhe believed ſhe could go down; and ſo led, between her father and maid, with tragedy ſteps ſhe reached the parlour, while your poor Maria followed with the mortified air of

one who has been ill-natured and indifferent to the beloved daughter of her benefactor. Mr. Freeland was tender and attentive to her all tea time, but I thought coldly civil to me.—Well, bed time came, and Miſs ſlept well without watchers—but the diſagreeableneſs of my ſituation prevented me from enjoying that balmy bleſſing. The next morning ſhe was purely recovered, and we were on tolerable terms. I fancy that unworthy ſervant, by ſupplying her with liquor, gets a great deal of money from her; for her allowance from Mr. Freeland is very abundant, and ſhe makes no appearance in cloaths adequate to the indulgence of her father.

Well, my dear, in this kind of way we went on for a week or ſo; Miſs, being more on her guard, was never above half

ſeas-over (as the phraſe is)—when one evening the old gentleman came home in a very pleaſant humour, and found his daughter and me at a game of picquet, (for as much as I hate cards, I did not think myſelf at liberty to decline any of her propoſals that ſquare with my own notions of rectitude) and told his daughter he had a piece of news to tell her, that he believed would not be totally diſagreeable; on my offering to retire, he ſaid ſit ſtill Miſs Barlow—why you muſt know, Patty, I have ſpent this afternoon with Mr. Blanchard and his ſon Tom, whom he is going to ſettle, and is looking out for a good wife—My dear Eliza, did you never obſerve the face of a child when it has been unexpectedly informed it ſhould have a new ſilk coat, a fine doll, or ſomething or other that it has ardently wiſhed for without much hopes of obtaining, if you have

not, you can't have an exact idea of Miſs Freeland's countenance when he mentioned the young man's wanting a wife—But to go on, Mr. Blanchard informed me, continued he, that his ſon has been out of his time theſe four years, that he has continued with the ſame gentleman ever ſince, that he will take him in partnerſhip on his advancing a pretty large capital, and to deal ingenuouſly with you, ſaid he, my old friend, I can't give my ſon ſo much money, or has he a juſt claim on me for ſo much, as I have more children, ſo he muſt look out for ſome young lady with a ſuitable fortune; I know you are able and willing to do handſome things for Miſs Patty, and if the young people like each other—what ſay you—I told him I had not the leaſt objection—Tom came in, we mentioned it, he bowed and ſaid he would

do

do himſelf the pleaſure of waiting on us to-morrow if agreeable; ſo child you muſt put on your beſt looks.——She giggled and bridled and was exceedingly delighted. On our going to bed, ſhe told me Mr. Blanchard was a very agreeable young man——called me her dear Miſs Barlowe—I ſighed not at her pleaſing proſpect, but at the recollection of my own paſt adverſity, of which this family know but very little, at leaſt that part of it I mean which relates to the perfidious Brightley. But, my dear Eliza, this epiſtle runs into length.

I have much more to communicate, as I muſt deſcribe every thing minutely, that you may not charge your poor Maria with capriciouſly forfeiting the protection of the maſter of this houſe. I am ſure of your candour, and I know your nice pe-

 netration,

netration, ſo no more exculpatory preamble. This will be ſoon followed by another from the unfortunate

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My dear Eliza,

MY laſt informed you that we expected Miſs Freeland's intended admirer the next day. She aroſe exceedingly alert, and as he was to come in the morning, prepared to receive him time enough, and ſeemed entirely free from that languor and ſtupidity with which, as I have obſerved, ſhe is uſually involved at that ſeaſon. I ſuppoſe the novelty of a lover, to her, operated as a cordial, and gave motion to the ſtagnate ſpirits. We breakfaſted moſt harmoniouſly, and before the things were

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removed, the gentleman made his appearance. He is a talliſh young man, of an agreeable countenance, with light hair; he was not embarraſſed, but made his entry in the ſame manner as a perſon would do who came about a matter of buſineſs. He bowed reſpectfully enough to us girls—the old gentleman ſhook him by the hand—Miſs coloured, but looked much pleaſed;—we all ſat down—Mr. Freeland aſked if he had breakfaſted—ſhe motioned to pour out a diſh of tea, which he politely declined, as he had already broke his faſt.—Some indifferent talk ſucceeded; among other things, he tendered his ſiſter's compliments to his miſtreſs—ſaid, he had not the pleaſure of knowing me. Mr. Freeland replied, I was the daughter of an old deceaſed friend, and in a few minutes withdrew. I was about to do the like—when Miſs Patty (encouraging enough

for

for the young man) ſaid, my dear, will you be ſo kind as to fetch my work out of the dreſſing-room. You may be ſure, my dear Eliza, I did not haſten back with it.—And here I will give you a deſcription of Miſs Freeland's perſon, which you may fancy I wrote while in the dreſſing-room. She is a little older than I am, but not ſo tall by about two inches, rather inclined to be plump, with a very pale complexion, (except when fluſhed, which her frequent potations very often occaſion) the moſt inanimate and dead eyes you ever ſaw, of a white grey, and her hair of the moſt unpleaſing light ſhade. Her mental faculties I have before hinted at. But to reſume the narration—Mr. Blanchard ſtaid an hour and half. She came up to me in the happieſt mood—aſked me how I liked the young gentleman—ran to the glaſs—did ſhe look well this morning? I told her,

with great truth, ſhe never looked better;—ſaid, the young gentleman had an agreeable perſon—I was her dear Maria—ſhe hoped a certain event, which might not be far of, would enliven me, &c. At dinner, the old gentleman was full of young Blanchard's praiſes—kiſs'd his daughter—was glad to ſee her in ſuch health and ſpirits—hoped ſhe would not be ſo puny in another ſituation. Poor man——but I am too minute. Well, my dear, for ſeveral days Mr. Blanchard was continually at the houſe, and ſeemed to like the bargain tolerably well, though there was none of that ardour and tender complacency which any woman of ſenſibility would naturally expect. The old folks had ſettled all preliminaries; and, I ſuppoſe, Mr. Freeland's offers were liberal to the full ſatisfaction of both ſenior and junior. But Miſs Freeland's unhappy foible has

totally

totally diſconcerted this matrimonial ſcheme, and drawn the diſpleaſure of her father on your poor ill-fated Maria.—She was on her guard pretty much during the courſe of each day; but a few evenings ſince, when ſhe did not expect him again that night, ſhe unhappily took too large a doſe of her favourite potation at ſupper. I ſaw, with concern, that ſhe was much intoxicated: Mr. Freeland noticed her diſorder, but little ſuſpected the cauſe. She ſaid, ſhe was not very well.—Unluckily our huſband elect came in with great gaiety—You did not expect to ſee me again this evening, ſaid he, but as my ſiſter is writing to town to a particular friend, who ſhe ſays will with much pleaſure purchaſe thoſe things we were talking of, ſhe hurried me to receive your commands. Poor Miſs Freeland ſeemed perfectly ſtupid, and could hardly

articulate a word. Mr. Freeland ſaid, poor Patty complains of being unwell—the lover could do no leſs than ſeat himſelf by her, take her hand, and ſay, my dear Miſs Freeland, what is the matter? Her eyes glared, and ſhe ſeemed like to puke—I ſat upon thorns—the old gentleman terribly frightened, ſaid, Miſs Barlowe, I am afraid the poor child is going to have another fit.—I motioned to aſſiſt her, but at that inſtant I am ſure my countenance expreſſed more of contempt than pity. However, he rang the bell, and Suſan appearing, ſhe and I led her up ſtairs—when ſhe immediately diſcharged the contents of her ſtomach, which ſent forth a powerful ſmell—we put her to bed, and leaving the maid by her, I went down to the gentlemen, who both at once enquired how ſhe was. I replied, Miſs Freeland had been extremely ſick, but I hoped

hoped would ſoon be better. The young man tried to look ſorrowful—the old one was really ſo—The poor girl, ſaid he, has a very weak and delicate conſtitution, but I doubt not of your tenderneſs, Tom. Mr. Blanchard bowed——Mr. Freeland look'd to me to confirm what he ſaid of the delicacy of her conſtitution—I was ſilent—what could I ſay? The young gentleman look'd at me—I bluſhed, conſcious of the awkwardneſs of my ſituation.—Mr. Freeland ſtept up to ſee his daughter——when he was gone, Mr. Blanchard aſked me, if Miſs Freeland was ſubject to theſe diſorders.—I replied, I had ſeen her ſo before, but I had not been here a great while, and was never intimate with Miſs Freeland till now, as conſiderable time had intervened ſince I ſaw her—the old gentleman coming, and ſaying Patty was much recovered, prevented any farther talk; and it growing

ing late, Mr. Blanchard took his leave, ſaying, he hoped to hear a good account of us in the morning.—I took up a candle to retire, when Mr. Freeland ſaid, Miſs Barlowe, I am afraid you do not much like my daughter, for I cannot otherwiſe account for that indifference (ſo repugnant, one would think, to the tender feelings of a young woman, whom I have always heard deſcribed as remarkable ſuſceptible and compaſſionate) you ſhew at her frequent indiſpoſitions. I was confuſed to the laſt degree. You know, Eliza, I can't diſſemble, or did I wiſh to pain a fond father by diſcloſing a thing which would diſtreſs him—At laſt, God forbid, Sir, I ſhould want humanity, Miſs Freeland's diſorder will ſoon go of—I am ſo ſenſible of my obligations to you, to give you the ſhadow of a reaſon to be diſpleaſed with me, gives me the moſt exquiſite pain—I will

attend

attend her immediately, and making a low curtſy, I went to the ſick room. She and her maid were in cloſe confabulation—but Miſs clipped the King's Engliſh (to uſe a low phraſe) and on Suſan's quitting her, fell as uſual into a ſound ſleep. She would have roſe at the uſual time, but I perſuaded her to continue in bed.—The old gentleman look'd cold upon me in the morning—I told him Miſs had had a good night, but I adviſed her to lie a little longer. Suſan came in to ſet the breakfaſt things, —her maſter was not in the room; with a familiarity at which I was much ſurprized, ſhe ſaid, my Miſtreſs was ſadly off her guard laſt night, and I wiſh ſhe may'nt have loſt her ſweetheart by it; for I met Mr. Blanchard this morning, and I am ſure he thinks ſhe was drunk—he aſked me ſeveral queſtions: and pray, ſaid I, what anſwers

did

did you make? Why, Miſs, I hate lying, and I told him it was not the firſt time—And how dare you, ſaid I, to expoſe your miſtreſs, and perhaps deſtroy the peace of the family—you deſerve to be ſent about your buſineſs immediately. Lack-a-day, Madam, quoth the indignant wench, may be you may turn out firſt. The miſery of my ſituation fill'd my eyes in a moment, and I could eat no breakfaſt. Mr. Freeland was not kind enough to preſs me—and the meal paſt in ſilence. As we were about to purſue our different avocations, a ſervant of Mr. Blanchard's arrived with a letter for Mr. Freeland.—He broke it open—but heavens! what were his emotions on reading the contents—his poor hands trembled—I was diſtreſſed for him; and ſaid, Sir, I am ſorry to ſee you ſo diſturbed.—Diſturbed! yes, I am indeed diſturbed—Blanchard is a raſcal—ſome-

body

body has baſely injured my poor dear girl—here, read—it was pretty much to this purpoſe; you know I have a knack at remembering.

Worthy Sir,

It gives me great pain to be obliged to decline an intimate connexion with a gentleman of your well known merit: indeed, more ſenſible pain than the reſignation of the ample fortune you ſo generouſly offered me with Miſs Freeland; but really, Sir, I have been credibly informed by a perſon who is near the young lady, that ſhe has a foible which would make her a very unſuitable wife for me. I wiſh things had not gone quite ſo far—but as it is, I thought it better to appear abrupt than to proceed in a courſe of diſſimulation. It is in your breaſt, my good Sir, to give what turn you pleaſe to this rupture; and I doubt

doubt not but your parental fondneſs will point out the method which ſhall beſt tend to preſerve Miſs Freeland's eaſe and reputation—let me repeat, that it is a matter of great mortification that I can never aſpire to be any thing more to you, than Sir,

Your moſt obliged

and very humble ſervant,

T. BLANCHARD.

I returned Mr. Freeland the letter.--Did you ever know ſuch a raſcal, ſaid he, what can the villain mean?--What does he hint at? there is not a more prudent or modeſt girl in the kingdom—things have gone far with a vengeance—and to think I ſhall ſit down quietly with his palaver, when it

it may be the death of my child. As he looked at me for an anſwer, I ſaid there was ſomething ſhocking indeed in Mr. Blanchard's abruptneſs; as in truth there was—begged him to be compoſed, and ſaid, we had better conceal it juſt for the preſent from his daughter, and hoped all would be well.--He went out ſoon after, and did not return to dinner—Miſs came down in the forenoon and ſeemed all the day to be in expectation of her lover; but no lover you may be aſſured appeared.—She was ſadly nettled, and made frequent journey's up ſtairs—wiſhed her father would come home——wondered what Mr. Blanchard meant, and ſo forth. Well, at length, home came the poor old gentleman—ſhe told him of Blanchard's neglect—he looked ſo troubled that I pitied him extremely; at laſt, ſays he, my dear you muſt endeavour to think no more

more of Tom Blanchard.—What do you mean, Papa?—Why he is unworthy of thee, he ſent me a note this morning in which he ſignifies you would make an unſuitable wife for him.——I can't give you an idea of Miſs Freeland's countenance—diſappointment, ſpite, and indignation were ſo ſtrongly blended together. She bit her lips, then begged him for God's ſake to let her ſee the letter.—He could not withſtand her intreaties, but gave it her—then what a ſcene followed: ſhe cried out, ſhe knew who the perſon near her was, from whom he had his intelligence, and then the violence of her paſſions co-operating with the liquor ſhe had drank, brought on real and very ſtrong hyſterics. All the houſe was in an uproar, and the vile Suſan put on an air of the utmoſt grief and tenderneſs. Miſs ſcreamed and raved, and every now

and

and then cried out, O that deceitful Miſs Barlowe, let her not come near me; while the poor deceived father and the officious Suſan ſtrove torecover her, and aſſured her no perſon ſhould come near her, that ſhe did not like.—Don't you, my dear Eliza, feel for the innocent Maria at this juncture. I had a good mind (late as it was) to quit the houſe that inſtant--but a moment's recollection ſhew'd me it would have been a confirmation of their ſlander.—She was put to bed, and three or four people ordered to ſit up with her——I retired to another apartment, but not to ſleep.—In the morning I was determined to go, but not without firſt talking to Mr. Freeland.

I have known the moſt pungent ſorrows, thought I, but never till now, have I been ſuppoſed capable of a mean baſeneſs. Well, my dear, towards morning the tumult ſub-

ſubſided.—At a late hour Mr. Freeland and I met in the parlour—he ſeemed to make an effort to be barely civil; I hemmed, to reaſſume my ſpirits, and ſaid, Sir, I am extremely ſorry to ſee by your lowering brow that I have incurred your diſpleaſure; you have before hinted that I behaved with unkindneſs and inhumanity to your daughter.—Miſs Freeland's ravings laſt night tended towards an accuſation that I had injured her character with Mr. Blanchard.—Believe me, Sir, I never had any private converſation with the young man, and believe alſo, that ingratitude and meanneſs are no part of my character.——Am I the ſole perſon who is near Miſs—might not a ſervant unprincipled and uneducated, be more likely to tattle about your daughter than I am.—He was confuſed; ſaid, his end in placing me about his daughter ſeemed

to

to be entirely fruſtrated (as he thought it would be an eligible aſylum for me, and we ſhould be happy in the company of each other) ſince we ſeemed to have a mutual diſlike.—I ſaid I was obliged to him for his kind intentions, but would on no conſideration trouble him any longer, but would take a place in the ſtage the following day.——He aſked where I propoſed to go——I anſwered, the world lay all before me, and Providence my guide; and then the officious tears would follow.—He returned to his daughter's room —I might, to be ſure, have appealed to the young gentleman, whom I ſuppoſe would have honour enough to exculpate me; but I ſo much diſdain the ſuſpicion, that I will only rely on my own integrity in this inſtance, and juſt at this juncture, it would but afflict Mr. Freeland, to whom I owe

ſome-

ſomething for his good intentions.—And, now my dear Eliza, I am preparing to enter on a new ſcene; my part in the World's Drama, ſeems to be a hard one: let me have your prayers, my true, my only friend, that I may act it well.—I am getting my little matters together—the greateſt part of them ſtill remain unpacked, and the day after to-morrow I ſhall bid adieu to this family, but perhaps may write one letter more from hence; don't write till you hear from me again, for I ſhall certainly be gone before it can arrive.—This has been written at different times, ſo any confuſion that appears you will attribute to that.

Yours this moment is brought me, it has been by ſome means delayed, for I ought to have received it ſome days ago.—Indeed, I knew my Eliza too well, to think ſhe would be entirely ſilent for three weeks—

weeks.——But it grows late, and I muſt poſtpone my reply till to-morrow; in the mean time my heart thanks you, and I am with every grateful ſentiment,

Your moſt affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER XXXV.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

I HAVE ſuffered ten long days to paſs without anſwering my ever-dear Maria's laſt letter, in hopes of receiving every day an account that the diſagreeable appearances in a family where ſhe had been ſo ſhort a time (and perhaps obſerved through the medium of low ſpirits) might vaniſh.

But if that ſhould not be the caſe, and your fears are realized with regard to your being obliged to ſeek out ſome more

more friendly manſion, let me conjure you, by our long and inviolable friendſhip, to give the preference to your unalterable Eliza.—The eſſentials of life in this part of the country are plentiful and cheap; and don't you think I ſhould be a thouſand times overpaid by the pleaſure of your company?—You will ſay, perhaps, you are rather leſs able to bear travelling expences than when you gave me the laſt mortifying negative.—But come, if your laſt guinea ſhould be expended, I can reimburſe you without the leaſt detriment to myſelf. I have had a little unexpect ſupply; particulars of which I ſhall not diſcloſe till I do it verbally, then your ſcrupulous delicacy ſhall be ſatisfied.——Oh come, Maria! for a time at leaſt bid adieu to corroding ſolicitude; for the little matter that nature requires, we can find diver-

tiſement in a thouſand things without expence; unknown, untaſted, and conſequently unenjoyed by the greateſt part of mankind.—How ought we to bleſs the goodneſs and admire the juſtice of God, who (though we want the means of procuring what the world call happineſs) has endued our minds with a capacity of enjoying pleaſures; the moſt refined and rational.—Converſation, books, the diverſity of the ſeaſons, are ſources to us inexhauſtible.—You have, I truſt, ſo far ſurmounted your partiality towards one unworthy object, that even talking over paſt ſcenes will furniſh part of our amuſement.—The fibres of your mind, too much (I doubt) relaxed by variety of diſtreſs, will recover their priſtine vigour, by a few months abode with your faithful friend.—But ſure, my dear Maria, any more arguments are ſuperfluous.

You

You are of a flexible and yielding nature; you love Eliza, and you are ſenſible I am with the trueſt and moſt ſincere affection,

Your real friend,

E. HARWOOD.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I WILL ſupoſe, my dear Eliza, you have received and read my two laſt letters, ſo I will go on, and reply to yours by-and-by.—When Mr. Freeland came into the room again, I dried my eyes and aſked after Miſs.—He ſaid ſhe was was very ill indeed——I aſked if I ſhould go up ſtairs—he ſaid by no means; and added, with much harſhneſs, that though my outward attractions were ſuperior to Patty's, he could not but hope ſhe was above acting with that duplicity towards me, as he found I had done toward

wards her.—Sir, I replied, ſend for Mr. Blanchard—No, no! He never enters my doors again.—Confront me with my accuſers, ſaid I, be they whom they will. I ſhall not, Miſs Barlowe, diſturb my poor girl at this time by altercations.—You ſaid you deſigned to go from hence, and——to be ſure, Sir, (I rejoined with quickneſs) I will take a place for to-morrow.——He put his hand in his pocket and took out a ſmall quantity of gold, and began to ſay, for your father's ſake, and in compaſſion to your youth and circumſtances.—But I put back his offered hand, and with (don't think me arrogant) an ingenuous dignity, ſaid no, Sir, no gold——the ſmalleſt trifle as an acknowledgment of deſert would be acceptable from the friend of my father—But I will not—I cannot ſo far degrade myſelf in my own eyes as to receive an

alms which your great bounty is willing to beſtow on an unworthy object—I am poor, but not abject.—He bluſhed, heſitated, and put up his money.—Dinner came, but I begged to be excuſed.—I went and ſecured a place in the coach which ſets out early, and buſied myſelf in preparing for my departure all the afternoon.———Miſs roſe in the evening. When I heard the old gentleman was with her—I ſlipt in, and ſaid Miſs Freeland, I am come to bid you good bye—and I wiſh you better—I ſuppoſe he had told her my intentions, for ſhe ſeemed not ſurpriſed—but only ſaid, do you go to-morrow, *Madam*—to which I replied, yes, *Madam*—To him I ſaid, (for I was determined to have no more leave-taking) I thank you Sir for all favours, and I wiſh you comfort in every ſhape.—He bowed his head, and ſaid, I had his good

wiſhes

wiſhes too.——The baſe Suſan was by with a face of malignant joy.

And ſo, my dear, I cloſe my little part in this family, and I proceed to reply according to the beſt of my poor abilities to your dear cordial letter.——You hoped, my dear Eliza, that the little diſguſts I had at firſt conceived were blown over—and my unuſual ſilence confirmed it.—You have now ſeen how impoſſible it was for me to ſtay, and I hope and believe you acquit me of any impropriety of conduct through the whole affair.—But now comes the hardeſt part of my taſk, namely, that of declining your preſſing invitation—Well as I love you, and deſtitute as I am, yet, my dearest Eliza, I muſt decline it.—I dare ſay, the addition of poor me at your table would not much incommode you—and

I am well aware it would in moſt reſpects be ſalutary for me—for intellectual advantages it would be ſuperlatively ſo.—But, my dear, why ſhould I not endeavour to ſearch after ſomething by which I may partly earn a little ſubſiſtence?—As for what you ſay of having made a little acquiſition, and defraying the expence of my journey—excuſe me, Eliza, but I look upon it as one of the pious frauds of friendſhip—dictated by your benevolence, and calculated to relieve my feelings.—Now my exalted friend, if none of theſe reaſons appear cogent—condeſcend to my weakneſs.—You know I have in my conſtitution a little daſh of ſuperſtition, and that I pay ſome regard to impulſes—and you muſt know, my dear, I feel an inclination to go near the metropolis—a deſire which I can hardly deſcribe or account for.——I

feel

feel an uncommon reluctance at going to ſo remote a place—notwithſtanding it is dignified by the worthieſt of her ſex, and the beſt friend that ever poor forlorn girl had to boaſt of.—So, my dear Eliza, let not an atom of diſpleaſure fall on me, for if you could ſee my heart, you would ſay (with all its weakneſſes) it was not unworthy to be cheriſhed.—So, my dear, I have accepted of Mrs. Walford's invitation—She lives at ——, a pleaſant village near town, through which the ſtage coach paſſes; and I propoſe by her means to endeavour to procure work of ſome kind from London.—I think I can ſoon get the knack of making up caps and other faſhionable parts of dreſs, or flower and embelliſh aprons, ruffles, &c, I am not remarkably ſlow at my needle; and if I can but earn four or five ſhillings a week, I may be able to make

Mrs. Walford little preſents, and leſſen the part of the burden of ſupporting me; and in the mean time may be a growing proficient in theſe ſmall arts.—London, I have heard, is the beſt retreat for either poverty or ſhame—one of theſe qualifications to be ſure I have—and I am not totally void of the latter, though it be falſe ſhame—for true ſhame ought to ariſe from guilt alone.

I can't ſay but my heart ſinks at the thoughts of new and untried ſcenes—— but I am not lowered by tender regret at leaving this houſe.

I will write to my dear Eliza as ſoon as I have explored my next caravanſary—— Good bye—it is late at night.—I ſet out betimes, and muſt court "Tired nature's calm reſtorer, balmy ſleep."

Perhaps

Perhaps at this instant you are putting up a petition for me.—The prayers of the righteous availeth much.—With that pleasing thought I will conclude, my dear Eliza's

Ever grateful and affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XXXVII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My dear Eliza,

BY ſix o'clock yeſterday morning I entered the ſtage.—Mr. Freeland had ordered a ſervant (not Suſan) to make me a diſh of tea.—The paſſengers were civil and obliging, and the journey was marked by no uncommon occurrences.—I had appriſed Mrs. Walford of my coming, and was received by her in a manner which did juſtice to her gratitude and humanity.—Her huſband ſeems good natured.—She has two pretty children—her houſe is well furniſhed, and they

carry

carry on a large trade, and have a ſhop well ſtocked with variety of articles.—It is a very populous and opulent neighbourhood, its vicinity to London makes it the conſtant reſidence of many rich merchants and traders—and the reſort of many others during the ſummer.

I have opened my deſign of procuring work to my kind hoſteſs, at which ſhe ſmiles--but does not think it impracticable. She has told me juſt now, that Mr. Rowe and his agreeable wife, have a houſe hard by.——She thought I might know him, as he uſed, ſhe ſaid, to be ſometimes at Mrs. Brightley's, who lived in our neighbourhood.——I bluſhed, and aſked her if ſhe was acquainted with Mr. Rowe? She replied he was a cuſtomer—and one day taking notice of her ſpeech, ſaid, what country-woman are you, Mrs. Walford?—

ford?—I am, Sir, from —— in the county of —— Aye, ſaid he, that is a very pleaſant place——do you know Mrs. Brightley, a widow-lady, who lives there? I was at her houſe once, and think it a charming country.——She ſaid it was a good many years ſince ſhe left it, and ſhe did not know the lady.——And did he mention any other acquaintance that he had there, Mrs. Walford?—No Miſs, he went away directly.—But you look concerned—was Mr. Rowe a particular acquaintance of yours?——Ah! my dear young lady, I wiſh you were happily ſettled with ſuch a man—though Mrs. Rowe is very deſerving, yet I can't help wiſhing—I turned it off, and told Mrs. Walford I knew Mr. Row extremely well, and was very glad to hear he was ſo happily married——ſaid he was very worthy of a good wife, but, I did not wiſh to be

that wife—and I added, that I hoped Mr. Rowe would not ſee or recollect me at her houſe—and another time I would tell her all, and give her my reaſons for wiſhing ſo.—But, my dear Eliza, is there not a ſtrange peculiarity in my fate—— that in ſo wide a field as the environs of London, I ſhould ſtumble on the very ſpot, ſo likely to meet the man who has cauſed me ſo much woe—for I have not the leaſt doubt that Mr. Rowe is ſtill intimate with Brightley—and, alas! I fear, Eliza, my coward heart would not be quite tranquil, at even the bare ſight of him.—I thought ſometime ſince that it would—but really Mrs. Walford's only mentioning what ſhe did, cauſed a palpitation which diſcovered me to myſelf, as I may ſay——for I am ſure I cannot charge my emotions to Mr. Rowe's account.—But to have done with the ſubject.—I am to accompany my kind entertainer

tertainer to town to-morrow; and for the firſt time in my life, am to have a tranſient glimpſe of the great and famous city of London.—So I will not cloſe till I return—When, according to my wonted cuſtom, I will tell my dear Eliza how it ſtrikes me.

Well, my dear Eliza, I have ſeen a little and but a little of that enormous, tremendous city—for it is ſo vaſt an object that I was ſtruck with ſome degree of fear and terror.—The immenſity of high and lofty buildings—the thouſands of different carriages—the myriads of hurrying people—numbers ſplendidly arrayed—and numbers of ſuch miſerable objects as my eyes never encountered, that I was more terrified than entertained—and when we quitted the vehicle that convyed us thither, I was afraid to ſtir an inch from Mrs. Walford.

We

We dined at an acquaintance of her's, the houſe of a reputable trader—and in the houſe I became a little more aſſured and capable of remarking, that the exterior of theſe young men and women (for ſeveral dined with us) is greatly beyond that of the country folk.—I ſuppoſe this was a pretty good ſpecimen of the London people.—Good ſenſe, I preſume, is not more plentifully ſcattered than in more remote parts.—I think you have an obſervation in one of your admirable letters, that we are often diſagreeably diſappointed among the poliſhed part of our ſpecies, by finding they do not improve upon us; as, on the contrary, a rough caſe often contains matter ſparkling and excellent beyond our expectation.

I deſigned to have made the neceſſary enquiries about ſome work, but I was really

really ſo ſcared and unhinged by the multiplicity of things about me, that I had not the power.——Cuſtom may do much, but I would not venture the length of a ſtreet (at this time) by myſelf for a conſiderable ſum.

And then, my dear, on our return we ſaw a poor wretch thrown down and a dray go over both his legs, who was carried groaning to an hoſpital.—And, as it was the cloſe of the evening, we ſaw groups of ſeemingly beautiful and well-dreſſed young women—which ſhe told me were women of the town.—Aſtoniſhing!—I could not believe it—till on my looking earneſtly at a very pretty creature, ſhe ſaid, ——, what do you ſtare at? You may ſuppoſe my horror of London was completed, and my curioſity for the preſent ſatisfied—and ſo much for this firſt expedition.

I hope

I hope ſoon to receive a line of ſweet forgiveneſs, for having refuſed your cordial invitation.——I muſt needs obey an impulſe, and it ſeems to have driven me near thoſe I would wiſh to avoid.—But an over-ruling Providence that notices the fall of the diminutive ſparrow, will enable me, I truſt, to ſteer aright—and if afflictions are to abide me every where, reſignation muſt be my part.

I ſhall not write immediately, that is, for ſome days, except matter ſhould ariſe—With reſpects to myd ear Eliza's venerable parent, I am,

Her moſt affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

A LINE of forgiveneſs, my dear Maria, I cannot write, becauſe I have not been offended; if it had been conſiſtent with your own deſires and inclinations to have gladdened our little rural dwelling, it is needleſs for me to ſay what an augmentation of felicity it would have been to your Eliza, eſpecially as my poor mother's intellectual, faculties ſeem to decay faſter than thoſe of her body. Her memory is greatly impaired, and there are but faint traces of that good,

good, but plain underſtanding, which a few years ſince gave dignity to her converſation. Indeed, my ſweet Maria, I am afraid a ſecond childiſhneſs is coming faſt upon her, and I may have the ſad mortification of attending ſome years on a perſon who has no ſenſations ſuperior to an animal. But do not miſtake me, my heart breathes not a wiſh to be deprived of her in this ſad ſtate, for ſo powerful is the force of nature, at leaſt with me, that I muſt always love my dear parent.

But to my dear Maria's affair—I approve entirely of the manner in which you left Mr. Freeland; his alms, as you juſtly ſtile it, was refuſed by you in the manner it merited. I doubt not but the fond infatuated man will, in a little time, ſee his daughter's failings, and conſequently my Maria's integrity.

As

As to what you ſay about impulſes, if there be any thing in it, they are given us by ſome ſuperior intelligence, and will not, one would conclude, lead to what will harm us. Mrs. Walford's reception of you has made me her moſt cordial friend. Alas, my dear, the world is not ſo bad as the miſanthropoſts depict it; that moſt endearing of all virtues, gratitude, reſides in many boſoms.

I am ſorry you were ſo perturbed at the converſation that paſſed about your old acquaintance, my dear; the old wound ſtill rankles—O that ſome very worthy man had power to draw the barbed arrow.

If you can procure ſome light employment, it will anſwer more than one good end.

And

And ſo you are frightened out of your wits at that great and tumultous town. I don't wonder at it at all; but when you become more familiarized to it, you will find many things in it peculiarly agreeable to your time of life; not that I think you will ever ceaſe to be ſo much a child of nature, but that you will prefer it to all the decorations of artificial life.

The concluſion of your letter calls forth the ſympathetic tear; but afflictions will not abide, my Maria, every where. Patience, one ſays, is never a ſolitary virtue; that complacent reſignation will be noticed by him whom you beautifully obſerve notices the little ſparrows; and even here, Maria Barlowe, I doubt not will be cheared with the rays of proſperity: that you may, and after

a long life, be finally and completely happy, is the ardent wish of your true and affectionate

ELIZA HARWOOD.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I HAVE been again at London, my dear Eliza, and went by water; my pleaſure was greater than my pain, as we glided along the ſmooth ſurface of the noble Thames; the beautiful villas ſo numerous on its banks, the auguſt buildings and churches of the two cities, the many fine barges and pleaſure boats, and others laden with things which adminiſter to the neceſſaries of life, all combined to fill my mind with the moſt pleaſing ſenſations, and I landed with pretty good ſpirits. We enquired, and

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found out a gentlewoman who deals in various commodities of the linen kind: ſhe has lawn and muſlin aprons, and ruffles ſlightly ſprigged. I have brought home a couple of aprons, for which I am to have ſixteen ſhillings, and I believe I can do them both in three weeks.

You can't think, Eliza, how delighted I am with this probability of being able to procure a little kind of livelihood. You muſt know, I propoſe making Mrs. Walford accept of twelve ſhillings, either in money or money's worth, which will partly indemnify her for what I eat, and with the remaining four ſhillings I can pay for my waſhing, poſtage of letters, and other little contingencies; and when I want cloaths, I will, without heſitation, ſacrifice that memento of ill-placed love. You ſay, the old wound ſtill rankles; ah, my dear

Eliza

Eliza, probe it not I beſeech you—I will turn to other ſubjects—but I ſhall revert to the melancholy, for my deareſt brother is what I muſt talk upon; is it not too certain, that he has found a watry and untimely grave, or perhaps is fallen a prey to ſome diſeaſe in an unhealthy climate?

But what a ſelfiſh creature I am, I have only touched on that part of yours which relates to myſelf, as though I was unmoved at your ſituation—you, who have been the moſt exemplary pattern of filial piety—but indeed, Eliza, I feel and ſympathiſe—good children mourn their parents removed in the full poſſeſſion of their mental powers, or bewail their melancholy ſtate, when they out-live them, which is too often the caſe in advanced life. Theſe ſad alternatives are among the bitter ingredients of life.—Such is

the friendly heart of my Eliza, that she will derive some comfort from learning that her Maria is in perfect health, and that she is at present in an hospitable mansion; and she will believe her when she says, she is, most sincerely,

Her affectionate

MARIA BARLOWE.

BRITISH MUSEUM 100677

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.